

LENIN





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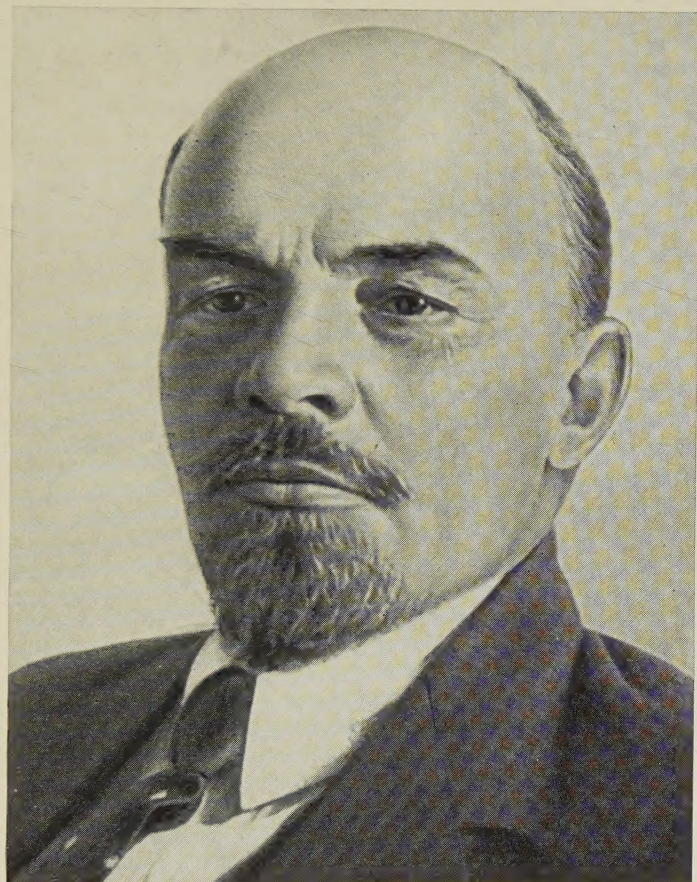




*Workers of All Countries, Unite!*

*W. L. G. H. G.*

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В.И. Ленин





V. I. Lenin

**The National Liberation  
Movement in the East**



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Translated from the Russian

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**О НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЬНОМ ДВИЖЕНИИ  
НАРОДОВ ВОСТОКА**

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## PREFACE

Assembled in this volume are articles and speeches in which Lenin discusses the liberation struggles of colonial and dependent nations and the theoretical and political aspects of the Communist Party's slogan on the national and colonial questions.

The volume is divided into three sections, of which the first covers the period from 1900 to the First World War. It contains Lenin's writings on the Chinese anti-imperialist movement in the opening year of the century and the Chinese Revolution of 1911, and the revolutions in Persia (1905-1911) and Turkey (1908-1909). The articles exposing British misrule in India stress the vast significance of the rising national liberation movement in that country.

In this section, too, Lenin wrathfully condemns the Italian attack on Tripolitania in 1911, which he describes as a "blood-bath", and speaks with admiration of the heroism of the Arabs, who preferred death in the battlefield to slavery. The Arab tribes would not bow to the invader and, Lenin wrote bitterly, "for a long time to come they will be 'civilised' by gun, bayonet, noose, fire and rape".

His sympathy was invariably with the enslaved colonial and semi-colonial peoples. He hailed the rise of the great liberation struggle in Asia and Africa, emphasising that it stirred to political activity millions who had been denied elementary rights and kept in a state of ignorance.

Lenin exposed the essence, objects and methods of the colonialists and ridiculed their lies about the "civilising mission" of imperialism. The object of the "civilised" countries in attacking the nations of Asia and Africa, in murdering hundreds of thousands of peaceful inhabitants and dooming the rest to slavery and misery—the object of all these monstrous crimes is to ensure super-profits for a handful of British, German, American and other financial

and industrial interests. The coining of profit from the people's blood and toil through brutal colonial wars—such is imperialism's "civilising mission".

Lenin entitled one of his articles "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia". That paradoxical title, Lenin remarked, contains a bitter truth. For the imperialist clique of Western Europe has joined forces with the arch-reactionaries in an attempt to retain its dominion. The British Viceroy in India is an inveterate enemy of progress and democratic freedom. He sees his mission in India as support for the most backward forms of social relationships and feudal despotism, and instigation of communal strife as a means of maintaining the country in submission.

Just as no individual should be judged by what he says, no class or group, no policy or government, should be judged by declarations and professions. In our day much is being said and written about the "free world". But that term is only a euphemism for the world of capitalism. The imperialist leaders believe that if the capitalist world, with its destructive wars and the division of society into exploited and exploiters, unemployed and multimillionaires, is re-christened "free world", that should make it more palatable to the millions. Indeed, those who see their chief task in keeping alive a system condemned by history, find it necessary to invent such misnomers to conceal the nature of the social relationships they continue to impose upon society.

Lenin, however, was always able to reveal the deep-going roots of events and the underlying motivations of classes, parties and governments. He disclosed the class interests behind their grandiloquent declaration. And this method invariably enabled him to bring out the truth, however ugly.

Who championed freedom, progress and democracy in the titanic contest between the colonial nations and the imperialists which unfolded in the early years of the century?

Volumes have been written on the supposed benefits colonialism bestowed upon these peoples, on the economic and cultural "progress" which "Western democracy" implanted by fire and sword. The fact that colonial oppression greatly retarded the economic, political and cultural development of the Eastern countries was eloquently demonstrated by Lenin. The imperialist powers, he wrote,



are anxious to keep the people in a state of ignorance and disfranchisement; their purpose is to retain political and economic backwardness, the monstrous form of exploitation and the medieval stagnation, as part of their battle against the young, virile, progressive and expanding movement of the peoples of the East.

Explaining the great significance of this movement, Lenin wrote in 1913:

“The awakening of Asia and the beginning of the struggle for power by the advanced proletariat of Europe are a symbol of the new phase in world history that began early this century.”

\* \* \*

The second section covers the period of the First World War.

Among the items in this section are several chapters from *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin's theory of imperialism provides a key to the understanding of the significance and perspectives of the national liberation movement in the East.

Other articles and speeches disclose the causes and aims of the war, which Lenin tersely describes as a war of freebooters for redivision of the booty. It was the outcome of the bitter rivalry of two imperialist groups, each striving for a redivision of colonies, spheres of influence, mandate territories, etc., to conform with the changed balance of power. Millions were sent to their death in order that the colonial super-profits might pass from one group of millionaires to another. It was, Lenin wrote, a “war of slave-owners” for the retention and consolidation of their system of colonial rapine.

But it was a case of reckoning without the host. For the war was bound to intensify the struggle for national independence throughout Asia and Africa. And Lenin wrote at the height of the war, in the summer of 1916: “National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, *progressive* and *revolutionary*.” A factor especially favourable for the success of these liberation movements of the oppressed nations, Lenin wrote, would be the “*simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the big

powers". Such an uprising took place in one of the big powers, Russia, a little more than a year after these words had been written: in October 1917 the proletariat of Russia rose against the bourgeoisie and this, the world's first socialist revolution, immensely accelerated the development of the revolutionary liberation movement in China, India and other parts of the East.

Running through all that Lenin wrote and said was a profound, sincere and genuinely consistent belief in democracy, based on supreme faith in the strength and wisdom of the masses, who were fighting for the fundamental interests of the people and its right to be master of its destiny. And it was from this standpoint of the confirmed democrat that Lenin approached the question of what slogan should be advanced for dependent and colonial nations. The slogan, Lenin emphasised, must be the right of every nation to self-determination up to and including secession. And from the very start, this became the programmatic demand of the revolutionary working-class party founded by Lenin.

The self-determination slogan implies that every nation, no matter how small or backward in its development, must be given the right to secede, if it so chooses, from the stronger nation to which it is subjugated. Lenin's views on the national question excluded coercion in any form or shape, or the imposition of the will of a dominant nation on a weaker one. Liberation of the colonies is, politically, the self-determination of nations. "Europeans," Lenin wrote, "often forget that colonial peoples *too* are nations, but to tolerate this 'forgetfulness' is to tolerate chauvinism."

Lenin mercilessly criticised those Social-Democrats in Germany, Russia, Britain, France and other countries who, having betrayed socialism in 1914, sided with their "own" imperialist governments and supported and justified the imperialist war. He called them "social-imperialists"—socialists in words, and accomplices of imperialism in deeds. And Lenin demolished all the sophistry with the aid of which these social-imperialists endeavoured to prove that the colonial nations had not yet "matured" to self-determination and independence. It is the bounden duty of socialists in the Great Powers, Lenin insisted, to oppose their "own", oppressing governments and side with the

oppressed nations. Socialists of the dominant nation must not only demand unconditional, uncompensated and immediate liberation of the colonies, but must "render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation" in the colonies and semi-colonies.

However, the socialists who sided with imperialism when war broke out were not the only ones to oppose the self-determination slogan and its application in the colonies. Objections came also from some revolutionary Social-Democrats. They were rebuffed by Lenin in his articles, "Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", "The Junius Pamphlet", "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", and several others.

In them, Lenin categorically rejects the pedantic and dogmatic interpretation of Marxism which regards the working class and its struggle for socialist revolution in isolation from the powerful national liberation movement of the colonial millions. For in reality, Lenin remarks, the struggle of the workers against capitalism goes side by side with the struggle of the peasants against landlordism and of the oppressed nations against colonialism. The class-conscious workers, therefore, must learn to link their battle for socialism with the actions of all sections of the people against feudal, national and every other variety of oppression.

"To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landlords, the church, the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.—to imagine that means *repudiating social revolution*."

The socialist revolution is a mighty stream that absorbs the numerous rivulets of popular discontent. It is the consummation of the mass struggle "of all the oppressed and discontented", including the subjugated colonial peoples. Objectively, all these movements are an expression of protest against capitalism, and it will be the task of the revolutionary proletariat to bring out their objective essence and direct them into a single channel.

The socialist revolution in Russia brought freedom to the nations oppressed by tsarism, granting each the right to chart its future.

The third section deals with the post-October period. It shows how the national question found practical solution in Soviet Russia, in conformity with the principles enunciated by Lenin; how the prerequisites were created for abolishing the national distrust and enmity implanted by the tsarist regime, and how the friendship of the many nations of the U.S.S.R. was forged, strengthened and made enduring.

Under tsarism, the peoples of Russia were divided into privileged and oppressed; now their relations had to be rebuilt on a foundation of genuine and complete equality. That was the corner-stone of Lenin's national policy and, in keeping with it, he opposed the so-called "autonomisation" project, which would have brought all the Soviet republics into the Russian Federation as autonomous units. In contrast to this, Lenin insisted on a voluntary union of Soviet republics based on complete equality. And it was his policy that led to the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a fraternal alliance of equal nations committed to the building of socialist society. This union was joined by the peoples of the Caucasus, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Moslems of the Volga area, and others.

Lenin's principle of *complete equality for all nations, big and small*, is unswervingly adhered to in every aspect of Soviet foreign policy.

But political equality was only one aspect. Lenin stressed the need to supplement it with constant economic and cultural assistance to those Soviet nations whose development—as a result of tsarist oppression—had lagged. The Communist Party and Soviet Government must exert every effort to help these nations eliminate their backwardness in the shortest possible time, build up their own industry and modern agriculture, raise cultural standards and thereby create the basis for transition to socialism.

This idea is basic to everything Lenin wrote after the October Revolution. It became a foundation factor of the



Soviet Government's national policy. The results of that policy are measurable in the immense progress made in the Soviet East.

Modern industries, new towns, railways and air transport have appeared in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Turkmenistan, where there was practically no industry before and where the camel and the pack-horse were the sole means of transportation. Vast tracts of lifeless desert and sun-scorched steppe have been converted into flourishing fields of wheat, rice and cotton. And all of this belongs to the people. Illiteracy has been wiped out in all the Eastern republics of the U.S.S.R.—in areas where under tsarism the art of reading and writing was the privilege of a chosen few. And the people—the peasants, workers and intellectuals—have come to take an active part in the affairs of government: they are represented by thousands of men and women in the local Soviets, and in the Supreme Soviets of their own republics and the U.S.S.R.

Socialism has changed the life of the Soviet East beyond recognition. The worker or collective farmer of, say, Uzbekistan or Tajikistan—educated and technically skilled—is a far cry, indeed, from the illiterate, downtrodden, disfranchised and poverty-stricken peasant of Turkestan under the tsars.

Soviet Central Asia provides cogent proof of the correctness of the policy of complete equality and unstinting assistance to oppressed nations, formulated in the early years of Soviet government by Lenin and undeviatingly carried out since then by the Soviet people. It has led to a degree of public activity and initiative and to material and cultural standards never before known to Asia's millions.

\* \* \*

A large part of the third section is devoted to the struggle for liberation in China, India and other Asian countries after 1917. The principal conclusion Lenin draws from his analysis of that struggle is that the imperialist war of 1914-18 and the establishment of Soviet power in Russia made the colonial and semi-colonial nations an active factor in world politics and the revolutionary destruction of imperialism. The morrow of world history, Lenin wrote, will

see the day when "the peoples oppressed by imperialism will finally be aroused and waked and the decisive long, hard struggle for their liberation will begin". In 1920, Lenin addressed a message of greetings to the Indian Revolutionary Association. It ended with the words: "Long live free Asia!"

"The prophecies of great hearts are always sure to come true," these words of Anatole France are fully applicable to the prophecies of Lenin. The entire subsequent course of history has shown how remarkably correct were Lenin's forecasts. The "morrow" which he predicted has become reality, and this reality means the peoples of Asia who have freed themselves from colonial enslavement. It means Africa which is throwing off the yoke of colonialism at a magnificent rate and has already formed more than forty independent states. It also means Latin America which is fighting more and more resolutely against the exploitation and enslavement by U.S. imperialism, and it means Cuba which has attained freedom and is now building socialism.

Speaking at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, Lenin gave a picture of the world as it had taken shape after the imperialist war of 1914-18. Out of a total population of 1,750 million, over 1,250 million, more than 70 per cent, were living in colonies and semi-colonies, or in countries which the war had reduced to a state of utter destitution. Another 250 million were accounted for by countries which, though they had retained their pre-war status, had become economically dependent on the United States. And, lastly, only 14 per cent of the world's population (approximately 250 million) were living in countries whose ruling element had profited most from the war.

In those early post-war years, the ruling faction of the victor powers considered itself omnipotent. For the Versailles and other treaties had, for the first time in world history—and this Lenin emphasises—given *legal* sanction to the "plunder, enslavement, subjugation, misery and semi-starvation of over 1,250 million human beings".

The young Soviet Republic was the only country that had taken the socialist path. Surrounded by imperialist states, which had tried to destroy it by armed assault, blockade and hunger, it was weakened by seven years of

incessant and devastating war. In Lenin's words, Russia was like a man suffering from severe wounds.

What a different picture the world presents today!

Today the Soviet Union is a mighty socialist power with a modern industry and developed agriculture, with a science which has achieved outstanding progress in space exploration, in the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and in other branches of knowledge; a country which fights indefatigably for peace but which has, in the event the imperialists should attempt to unleash a war, everything necessary to discourage such attempts. The Soviet Union is not alone now, it has other socialist countries with it. Of the 3,500 million people inhabiting the globe, about one third have already broken away from the capitalist system and have formed the world socialist system.

The enormous momentum which the national liberation movement has gathered in Asia and Africa in recent years has resulted in a great majority of the colonial peoples throwing off the rule of the colonialists and forming their independent states. These countries are now successfully tackling the problems of their economic and cultural development. They are becoming increasingly active in international affairs and are taking a stand against imperialism and for peaceful coexistence.

Gone are the days when imperialism was predominant and its armed forces held almost the whole world in its grip. The omnipotence of imperialism upheld by its political leaders, generals and poets has been shattered. The imperialist rulers of the United States, Britain and France are no longer able to shape the destinies of the world, and the bounds of their power are shrinking from day to day. "The main direction of mankind's development is determined by the world socialist system, the international working class, all revolutionary forces", says the main document adopted by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in 1969.

The influence of the world socialist system on the course of social development in the interests of peace, democracy and socialism, is mounting. The example of the socialist countries, where exploitation of man by man, unemployment and poverty have been eliminated for ever, has a growing appeal for the newly independent states in Asia

and Africa. Upon winning their independence, a number of these countries embarked on the non-capitalist road of development clearly realising that only a transition to socialism would ensure not just their national but also their social liberation, a rapid growth of economy, an improvement in the material welfare of the population, and an all-round cultural development.

The imperialists resort to countless ruses, deceit and underhand methods, covered up with talk about their imaginary "aid" to the undeveloped countries, in an attempt to retain the privilege to continue exploiting the newly independent states. Again and again they resort to force of arms in order to bring them back under the yoke of colonialism. In the summer of 1967 the Israeli aggressors supported by American imperialists invaded the Arab countries. For several years now the ruling circles of the U.S.A. acting as an international gendarme has been waging a war of plunder against Vietnam, thereby arousing the profound indignation of all progressive mankind. But the heroic resistance put up by the Vietnamese people and the support given them in this struggle by all freedom-loving peoples make it self-evident that this act of aggression is also doomed to failure. The imperialists will not be able to reverse the course of history for all the crimes they may yet commit.

The picture of the world today is quite different from what it was in Lenin's lifetime. It has changed and is still changing in the direction which Lenin foresaw so clearly years ago. He lived to witness only the beginning of the now powerful national liberation movements in the East, but what he said about their significance, character and prospects has been borne out by the events of the last decades. Lenin's definition of the modern epoch as the epoch of the commencement of socialist revolution, as the epoch of transition from the capitalist to the communist socio-economic formation, has also been fully confirmed. It is imperative to study Lenin's works in order to understand what is happening in the world today. And not only for this. Lenin's ideas have become the greatest transforming force of our modern age.



**Part One**  
**1900-1914**



## THE WAR IN CHINA<sup>1</sup>

Russia is bringing her war with China to a close: a number of military districts have been mobilised, hundreds of millions of rubles have been spent, tens of thousands of troops have been dispatched to China, a number of battles have been fought and a number of victories won—true, not so much over regular enemy troops, as over Chinese insurgents and, particularly, over the unarmed Chinese populace, who were drowned or killed, with no holding back from the slaughter of women and children, not to speak of the looting of palaces, homes, and shops. The Russian Government, together with the press that kowtows to it, is celebrating a victory and rejoicing over the fresh exploits of the gallant soldiery, rejoicing at the victory of European culture over Chinese barbarism and over the fresh successes of Russia's "civilising mission" in the Far East.

But the voices of the class-conscious workers, of the advanced representatives of the many millions of the working people, are not heard amid this rejoicing. And yet, it is the working people who bear the brunt of the victorious new campaigns, it is working people who are sent to the other end of the world, from whom increased taxes are extorted to cover the millions expended. Let us, therefore, see: What attitude should the socialists adopt towards this war? In whose interests is it being fought? What is the real nature of the policy now being pursued by the Russian Government?

Our government asserts first of all that it is not waging war against China; that it is merely suppressing a rebellion, pacifying rebels; that it is helping the lawful government of China to re-establish law and order. True, war has not been declared, but this does not change the situation a bit, because war is being waged nonetheless. What made the

Chinese attack Europeans, what caused the rebellion which the British, French, Germans, Russians, Japanese, etc., are so zealously crushing? "The hostility of the yellow race towards the white race", "the Chinese hatred for European culture and civilisation"—answer the supporters of the war. Yes! It is true the Chinese hate the Europeans, but which Europeans do they hate, and why? The Chinese do not hate the European peoples, they have never had any quarrel with them—they hate the European capitalists and the European governments obedient to them. How can the Chinese not hate those who have come to China solely for the sake of gain; who have utilised their vaunted civilisation solely for the purpose of deception, plunder, and violence; who have waged wars against China in order to win the right to trade in opium with which to drug the people (the war of England and France with China in 1856); and who hypocritically carried their policy of plunder under the guise of spreading Christianity? The bourgeois governments of Europe have long been conducting this policy of plunder with respect to China, and now they have been joined by the autocratic Russian Government. This policy of plunder is usually called a colonial policy. Every country in which capitalist industry develops rapidly has very soon to seek colonies, i.e., countries in which industry is weakly developed, in which a more or less patriarchal way of life still prevails, and which can serve as a market for manufactured goods and a source of high profits. For the sake of the profit of a handful of capitalists, the bourgeois governments have waged endless wars, have sent regiments to die in unhealthy tropical countries, have squandered millions of money extracted from the people, and have driven the peoples in the colonies to desperate revolts or to death from starvation. We need only recall the rebellion of the native peoples against the British in India<sup>2</sup> and the famine that prevailed there, or think of the war the English are now waging against the Boers.

And now the European capitalists have placed their rapacious paws upon China, and almost the first to do so was the Russian Government, which now so loudly proclaims its "disinterestedness". It "disinterestedly" took Port Arthur away from China and began to build a railway to Manchuria under the protection of Russian troops. One

after another the European governments began feverishly to loot, or as they put it, to "rent", Chinese territory, giving good grounds for the talk of the partition of China. If we are to call things by their right names, we must say that the European governments (the Russian Government among the very first) have already started to partition China. However, they have not begun this partitioning openly, but stealthily, like thieves. They began to rob China as ghouls rob corpses, and when the seeming corpse attempted to resist, they flung themselves upon it like savage beasts, burning down whole villages, shooting, bayoneting, and drowning in the Amur River unarmed inhabitants, their wives, and their children. And all these Christian exploits are accompanied by howls against the Chinese barbarians who dared to raise their hands against the civilised Europeans. The occupation of Niuchuang and the moving of Russian troops into Manchuria are temporary measures, declares the autocratic Russian Government in its circular note of August 12, 1900 addressed to the Powers; these measures "are called forth exclusively by the necessity to repel the aggressive operations of Chinese rebels"; they "cannot in the least be regarded as evidence of any selfish plans, which are totally alien to the policy of the Imperial Government."

Poor Imperial Government! So Christianly unselfish, and yet so unjustly maligned! Several years ago it unselfishly seized Port Arthur, and now it is unselfishly seizing Manchuria; it has unselfishly flooded the frontier provinces of China with hordes of contractors, engineers and officers, who, by their conduct, have roused to indignation even the Chinese, known for their docility. The Chinese workers employed in the construction of the Chinese railway had to exist on a wage of ten kopeks a day—is this not unselfish on Russia's part?

How is our government's senseless policy in China to be explained? Who benefits by it? The benefit goes to a handful of capitalist magnates who carry on trade with China, to a handful of factory owners who manufacture goods for the Asian market, to a handful of contractors who are now piling up huge profits on urgent war orders (factories producing war equipment, supplies for the troops, etc., are now operating at full capacity and are engaging



hundreds of new workers). This policy is of benefit to a handful of nobles who occupy high posts in the civil and military services. They need adventurous policies, for these provide them with opportunities for promotion, for making a career and gaining fame by their "exploits". In the interests of this handful of capitalists and bureaucratic scoundrels, our government unhesitatingly sacrifices the interests of the entire people. And in this case, as always, the autocratic tsarist government has proved itself to be a government of irresponsible bureaucrats servilely cringing before the capitalist magnates and nobles.

What benefits do the Russian working class and the labouring people generally obtain from the conquests in China? Thousands of ruined families, whose breadwinners have been sent to the war; an enormous increase in the national debt and the national expenditure; mounting taxation; greater power for the capitalists, the exploiters of the workers; worse conditions for the workers; still greater mortality among the peasantry; famine in Siberia—this is what the Chinese war promises and is already bringing. The entire Russian press, all the newspapers and periodicals are kept in a state of bondage; they dare not print anything without permission of the government officials. This is the reason for the lack of precise information as to what the Chinese war is costing the people; but there is not doubt that it requires the expenditure of *many hundreds of millions of rubles*. It has come to our knowledge that the government, by an unpublished decree, handed out the tidy sum of a hundred and fifty million rubles for the purpose of waging the war. In addition to this, current expenditures on the war absorb *one million rubles* every three or four days, and these terrific sums are being squandered by a government which, haggling over every kopek, has steadily cut down grants to the famine-stricken peasantry; which can find no money for the people's education; which, like any kulak, sweats the workers in the government factories, sweats the lower employees in the post offices, etc.!

Minister of Finance Witte declared that on January 1, 1900, there were two hundred and fifty million rubles available in the treasury. Now this money is gone, it has been spent on the war. The government is seeking loans,

is increasing taxation, is refusing necessary expenditures because of the lack of money, and is putting a stop to the building of railways. The tsarist government is threatened with bankruptcy, and yet it is plunging into a policy of conquest—a policy which not only demands the expenditure of enormous sums of money, but threatens to plunge us into still more dangerous wars. The European states that have flung themselves upon China are already beginning to quarrel over the division of the booty, and no one can say how this quarrel will end.

But the policy of the tsarist government in China is not only a mockery of the interests of the people—its aim is to corrupt the political consciousness of the masses. Governments that maintain themselves in power only by means of the bayonet, that have constantly to restrain or suppress the indignation of the people, have long realised the truism that popular discontent can never be removed and that it is necessary to divert the discontent from the government to some other object. For example, hostility is being stirred up against the Jews; the gutter press carries on Jew-baiting campaigns, as if the Jewish workers do not suffer in exactly the same way as the Russian workers from oppression of capital and the police government. At the present time, the press is conducting a campaign against the Chinese; it is howling about the savage yellow race and its hostility towards civilisation, about Russia's tasks of enlightenment, about the enthusiasm with which the Russian soldiers go into battle, etc., etc. Journalists who crawl on their bellies before the government and the money-bags are straining every nerve to rouse the hatred of the people against China. But the Chinese people have at no time and in no way oppressed the Russian people. The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer—they suffer from an Asiatic government that squeezes taxes from the starving peasantry and that suppresses every aspiration towards liberty by military force; they suffer from the oppression of capital, which has penetrated into the Middle Kingdom.

The Russian working class is beginning to move out of the state of political oppression and ignorance in which the masses of the people are still submerged. Hence, the duty of all class-conscious workers is to rise with all their

might against those who are stirring up national hatred and diverting the attention of the working people from their real enemies. The policy of the tsarist government in China is a criminal policy which is impoverishing, corrupting, and oppressing the people more than ever. The tsarist government not only keeps our people in slavery but sends them to pacify other peoples who rebel against their slavery (as was the case in 1849 when Russian troops suppressed the revolution in Hungary). It not only helps the Russian capitalists to exploit the Russian workers, whose hands it ties to hold them back from combining and defending themselves, but it also sends soldiers to plunder other peoples in the interests of a handful of rich men and nobles. There is only one way in which the new burden the war is thrusting upon the working people can be removed, and that is the convening of an assembly of representatives of the people, which would put an end to the autocracy of the government and compel it to have regard for interests other than those solely of a gang of courtiers.

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## From THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS IN STUTTGART<sup>3</sup>

This is not the first time the colonial question has figured at international congresses. Up till now their decisions have always been an unqualified condemnation of bourgeois colonial policy as a policy of plunder and violence. This time, however, the Congress Commission<sup>4</sup> was so composed that opportunist elements, headed by Van Kol of Holland, predominated in it. A sentence was inserted in the draft resolution to the effect that the Congress did not in principle condemn all colonial policy, for under socialism colonial policy could play a civilising role. The minority in the Commission (Ledebour of Germany, the Polish and Russian Social-Democrats, and many others) vigorously protested against any such idea being entertained. The matter was referred to Congress, where the forces of the two trends were found to be so nearly equal that there was an extremely heated debate.

The opportunists rallied behind Van Kol. Speaking for the majority of the German delegation Bernstein and David urged acceptance of a "socialist colonial policy" and fulminated against the radicals for their barren, negative attitude, their failure to appreciate the importance of reforms, their lack of a practical colonial programme, etc. Incidentally, they were opposed by Kautsky, who felt compelled to ask the Congress to pronounce *against* the majority of the German delegation. He rightly pointed out that there was no question of rejecting the struggle for reforms; that was explicitly stated in other sections of the resolution, which had evoked no dispute. The point at issue was whether we should make concessions to the modern regime of bourgeois plunder and violence. The Congress was to discuss present-day colonial policy, which was based on the

downright enslavement of primitive populations. The bourgeoisie was actually introducing slavery in the colonies and subjecting the native populations to unprecedented outrages and acts of violence, "civilising" them by the spread of liquor and syphilis. And in that situation socialists were expected to utter evasive phrases about the possibility of accepting colonial policy in principle! That would be an outright desertion to the bourgeois point of view. It would be a decisive step towards subordinating the proletariat to bourgeois ideology, to bourgeois imperialism, which is now arrogantly raising its head.

The Congress defeated the Commission's motion by 128 votes to 108 with ten abstentions (Switzerland). It should be noted that at Stuttgart, for the first time, each nation was allotted a definite number of votes, varying from twenty (for the big nations, Russia included) to two (Luxembourg). The combined vote of the small nations, which either do not pursue a colonial policy, or which suffer from it, outweighed the vote of nations where even the proletariat has been somewhat infected with the lust of conquest.

This vote on the colonial question is of very great importance. First, it strikingly showed up socialist opportunism, which succumbs to bourgeois blandishments. Secondly, it revealed a negative feature in the European labour movement, one that can do no little harm to the proletarian cause, and for that reason should receive serious attention. Marx frequently quoted a very significant saying of Sismondi. The proletarians of the ancient world, this saying runs, lived at the expense of society; modern society lives at the expense of the proletarians.

The non-propertyed, but non-working, class is incapable of overthrowing the exploiters. Only the proletarian class, which maintains the whole of society, can bring about the social revolution. However, as a result of the extensive colonial policy, the European proletarian *partly* finds himself in a position when it is *not* his labour, but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society. The British bourgeoisie, for example, derives more profit from the many millions of the population of India and other colonies than from the British workers. In certain countries this provides



the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism. Of course, this may be only a temporary phenomenon, but the evil must nonetheless be clearly realised and its causes understood in order to be able to rally the proletariat of all countries for the struggle against such opportunism. This struggle is bound to be victorious, since the "privileged" nations are a diminishing faction of the capitalist nations.

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beginning of September 1907

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## INFLAMMABLE MATERIAL IN WORLD POLITICS

The revolutionary movement in various European and Asian countries has latterly made itself felt so weightily that we see before us the fairly clear outlines of a new and incomparably higher stage in the international proletarian struggle.

There has been a counter-revolution in Persia—a peculiar combination of the dissolution of Russia's First Duma, and of the Russian insurrection at the close of 1905.<sup>5</sup> Shamefully defeated by the Japanese, the armies of the Russian tsar are taking their revenge by zealously serving the counter-revolution. The exploits of the Cossacks in mass shootings, punitive expeditions, manhandling and pillage in Russia are followed by their exploits in suppressing the revolution in Persia.<sup>6</sup> That Nicholas Romanov, heading the Black-Hundred<sup>7</sup> landlords and capitalists scared by strikes and civil war, should be venting his fury on the Persian revolutionaries, is understandable. It is not the first time that Russia's Christian soldiers are cast in the role of international hangmen. That Britain is pharisaically washing her hands of the affair, and maintaining a demonstratively friendly neutrality towards the Persian reactionaries and supporters of absolutism, is a somewhat different matter. The British Liberal bourgeoisie, angered by the growth of the labour movement at home and frightened by the mounting revolutionary struggle in India, are more and more frequently, frankly and sharply demonstrating what *brutes* the highly "civilised" European "politicians", men who have passed through the high school of constitutionalism, can turn into when it comes to a rise in the mass struggle against capital and the capitalist colonial system, i.e., a system of enslavement, plunder and violence. The position of the Persian revolutionaries is a difficult one;

theirs is a country which the masters of India on the one hand, and the counter-revolutionary Russian Government on the other, were on the point of dividing up between themselves. But the dogged struggle in Tabriz and the repeated swing of the fortunes of war to the revolutionaries who, it seemed, had been utterly defeated, are evidence that the Shah's bashi-bazouks, even though aided by Russian Lyakhovs and British diplomats, are encountering the most vigorous resistance from the people. A revolutionary movement that can offer armed resistance to attempts at restoration, that compels the attempters to call in foreign aid—such a movement cannot be destroyed. In these circumstances, even the fullest triumph of Persian reaction would merely be the prelude to fresh popular rebellion.

In Turkey, the revolutionary movement in the army, led by the Young Turks,<sup>8</sup> has achieved victory. True, it is only half a victory, or even less, since Turkey's Nicholas II<sup>9</sup> has so far managed to get away with a promise to restore the celebrated Turkish constitution. But in a revolution such half-victories, such forced and hasty concessions by the old regime, are the surest guarantee of new and much more decisive, more acute fluctuations of the civil war, involving broader masses of the people. And the school of civil war is never lost upon nations. It is a hard school, and its complete course *necessarily* includes victories for the counter-revolution, the unbridled licence of the infuriated reactionaries, the savage reprisals of the old government against the rebels, etc. But only incurable pedants and doddering mummies can moan over the fact that the nations have entered this very painful school. For it is one that teaches the oppressed classes how to wage civil war and how to carry the revolution to victory. It concentrates in the masses of contemporary slaves the hatred which downtrodden, benighted and ignorant slaves have always carried within them, and which leads to the supreme history-making feats of slaves who have realised the shame of their slavery.

In India lately, the native slaves of the "civilised" British capitalists have been a source of worry to their "masters". There is no end to the acts of violence and plunder which goes under the name of the British system of government in India. Nowhere in the world—with the exception, of

course, of Russia—will you find such abject mass poverty, such chronic starvation among the people. The most Liberal and Radical personalities of free Britain, men like John Morley—that authority for Russian and non-Russian Cadets,<sup>10</sup> that luminary of “progressive” journalism (in reality, a lackey of capitalism)—become regular Genghis Khans when appointed to govern India, and are capable of sanctioning every means of “pacifying” the population in their charge, even to the extent of *flogging* political protestors! *Justice*, the little weekly of the British Social-Democrats, has been *banned* in India by these Liberal and “Radical” scoundrels like Morley. And when Keir Hardie, the British M.P. and leader of the Independent Labour Party, had the temerity to visit India and speak to the Indians about the most elementary democratic demands, the whole British bourgeois press raised a howl against this “rebel”. And now the most influential British newspapers are in a fury about “agitators” who disturb the tranquility of India, and are welcoming court sentences and administrative measures in the purely Russian, Plehve<sup>11</sup> style to suppress democratic Indian publicists. But in India the street is beginning to stand up for *its* writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak—he was sentenced to a long term of exile, the question in the British House of Commons the other day revealing that the Indian jurors had declared for acquittal and that the verdict had been passed *by the vote of the British jurors!*—this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money-bag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay. In India, too, the proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle—and, that being the case, the Russian-style British regime in India is doomed! By their colonial plunder of Asian countries, the Europeans have succeeded in so steeling one of them, Japan, that she has gained great military victories, which have ensured her independent national development. There can be no doubt that the age-old plunder of India by the British, and the contemporary struggle of all these “advanced” Europeans against Persian and Indian democracy, will *steel* millions, tens of millions of proletarians in Asia to wage a struggle against their oppressors which will be just as victorious as that of the Japanese.

The class-conscious European worker now has comrades in Asia, and their number will grow by leaps and bounds.

In China, too, the revolutionary movement against the medieval order has made itself felt with particular force in recent months. True, nothing definite can yet be said about the present movement—there is such scanty information about it and such a spate of reports about revolts in various parts of the country. But there can be no doubt about the vigorous growth of the “new spirit” and the “European currents” that are stirring in China, especially since the Russo-Japanese war;<sup>12</sup> and consequently, the old-style Chinese revolts will inevitably develop into a conscious democratic movement. That some of the participants in colonial plunder are this time greatly concerned is borne out by the way the French are acting in Indo-China: they *helped* the “historic authorities” in China to put down the revolutionaries! They feared equally for the safety of their “own” Asian possessions bordering on China.

The French bourgeoisie, however, are concerned not only over their Asian possessions. The barricades at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, near Paris, the shooting down of the strikers who built these barricades (on Thursday, July 30[17])—these events are renewed evidence of the sharpening of the class struggle in Europe. Clemenceau, the Radical, who governs France on behalf of the capitalists, is working with uncommon zeal to shatter the last lingering remnants of republican-bourgeois illusions among the proletariat. The shooting down of the workers by troops acting on the orders of a “Radical” government has, under Clemenceau, become almost more frequent than before. The French socialists have already dubbed Clemenceau “The Red” for this; and now, when his agents, gendarmes and generals have again shed the blood of the workers, the socialists recall the catch-phrase once uttered by this ultra-progressive bourgeois republican to a workers’ delegation: “You and I are on different sides of the barricade.” Yes, the French proletariat and the most extreme bourgeois republicans have finally taken their place on opposite sides of the barricade. The French working class shed much blood to win and defend the republic, and now, on the basis of the fully established republican order, the decisive struggle between the propertied class and the working people is



rapidly coming to a head. "It was not simply brutality," *l'Humanité*<sup>13</sup> wrote of the July 30 events, "it was part of a battle." The generals and the police were bent on provoking the workers and turning a peaceful unarmed demonstration into a massacre. But the troops that surrounded and attacked the unarmed strikers and demonstrators met with resistance, their action leading to the immediate erection of barricades, and to events which are agitating the whole of France. These barricades, *l'Humanité* says, were built of boards and were ludicrously ineffectual. But that is not important. What is important is that the Third Republic had eliminated the old habit of barricades; whereas now "Clemenceau is reviving that habit"—and he is just as candid about the matter as were "the butchers of June 1848, and Galliffet in 1871",<sup>14</sup> on the subject of civil war.

And the socialist press is not alone in recalling these great historic dates in connection with the events of July 30. The bourgeois press is furiously attacking the workers accusing them of behaving as if they intended to start a socialist revolution. One paper cites a minor but characteristic incident indicative of the mood of both sides at the scene of action. When the workers were carrying a wounded comrade past General Virvaire, who directed the operations against the strikers, there were shouts from the demonstrators: "*Saluez!*" And the general of the bourgeois republic saluted his wounded enemy.

The sharpening of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is to be observed in all the advanced capitalist countries. The tendency is the same everywhere, though it manifests itself differently in accordance with the difference in historical conditions, political systems and forms of the labour movement. In America and Britain, where complete political liberty exists and where the proletariat has no revolutionary and socialist traditions that could be called living traditions, this sharpening of the struggle is expressed in the mounting movement against the trusts, in the extraordinary growth of socialism and the increasing attention it is getting from the propertied classes, and in workers' organisations, in some cases purely economic ones, that are beginning to enter upon systematic and independent proletarian political struggle. In Austria and Germany, and partly also in the Scandinavian coun-

tries, this sharpening of the class struggle shows itself in election campaigns, in party relationships, in the closer alignment of the bourgeoisie of all sorts and shades against their common enemy, the proletariat, and in the hardening of judicial and police persecution. Slowly but surely, the two opposing camps are building up their strength, consolidating their organisations, drawing apart with increasing sharpness in every sphere of public life, as if preparing, silently and intently, for the impending revolutionary battles. In the Latin countries, Italy and particularly France, the sharpening of the class struggle is expressed in especially stormy, violent, and occasionally forthright revolutionary outbreaks, when the pent-up hatred of the proletariat for its oppressors bursts out with unexpected force, and the "peaceful" atmosphere of parliamentary struggle gives way to episodes of real civil war.

The international revolutionary movement of the proletariat does not and cannot develop evenly and in identical forms in different countries. The full and all-round utilisation of every opportunity in every field of activity comes only as the result of the class struggle of the workers in the various countries. Every country contributes its own valuable and specific features to the common stream; but in each particular country the movement suffers from its own one-sidedness, its own theoretical and practical shortcomings of the individual socialist parties. On the whole we clearly see a tremendous step forward of international socialism, the rallying of million-strong armies of the proletariat in the course of a series of practical clashes with the enemy, and the approach of a decisive struggle with the bourgeoisie—a struggle for which the working class is far better *prepared* than in the days of the Commune,<sup>15</sup> that last great proletarian insurrection.

And this step forward of the whole of international socialism, along with the sharpening of the revolutionary-democratic struggle in Asia, places the Russian revolution in a special and especially difficult position. The Russian revolution has a great international ally both in Europe and in Asia, but, at the same time, and *for that very reason*, it has not only a national, not only a Russian, but also an *international* enemy. Reaction against the mounting proletarian struggle is inevitable in all capitalist countries, and

it is uniting the bourgeois governments of the whole world against every popular movement, against every revolution both in Asia and, particularly, in Europe. The opportunists in our Party, like the majority of the Russian liberal intelligentsia, are still dreaming of a bourgeois revolution in Russia that will "not alienate" or scare away the bourgeoisie, that will not engender "excessive" reaction, or lead to the seizure of power by the revolutionary classes. Vain hopes! A philistine utopia! The amount of inflammable material in all the advanced countries of the world is increasing so speedily, and the conflagration is so clearly spreading to most Asian countries which only yesterday were in a state of deep slumber, that the intensification of international bourgeois reaction and the aggravation of every single national revolution are absolutely inevitable.

The historical tasks of our revolution are not being performed by the forces of counter-revolution, and cannot be. The Russian bourgeoisie are necessarily gravitating more and more towards the international anti-proletarian and anti-democratic trend. It is not on liberal allies that the Russian proletariat should count. It must follow its own independent path to the complete victory of the revolution, basing itself on the need for a forcible solution of the agrarian question in Russia by the peasant masses themselves, helping them to overthrow the rule of the Black-Hundred landlords and the Black-Hundred autocracy, setting itself the task of establishing a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in Russia, and remembering that its struggle and its victories are inseparable from the international revolutionary movement. Less illusions about the liberalism of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie (counter-revolutionary both in Russia and the world over). More attention to the growth of the international revolutionary proletariat!

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## EVENTS IN THE BALKANS AND IN PERSIA

The political press in Russia and throughout Europe is preoccupied lately with the events in the Balkans.<sup>16</sup> For a time a European war seemed dangerously close, and that danger has by no means been eliminated, though it is much more probable that the whole thing will end up in shouting and clamour and war will be avoided.

Let us take a glance at the nature of the crisis and the tasks it imposes on the workers' party in Russia.

A powerful impetus to the political awakening of the Asian peoples was given by the Russo-Japanese War and the Russian revolution.<sup>17</sup> But this awakening spread so slowly from one country to another that in Persia Russian counter-revolution played and continues to play what amounts to a decisive role, while in Turkey the revolution was at once confronted with a counter-revolutionary coalition of the powers, Russia at their head. True, the general tone of the European press and of the diplomatic statements would appear to contradict this. If we are to believe these statements and the semi-official press, there is universal "sympathy" with regenerated Turkey, a universal desire to see her constitutional regime strengthened and developed, general praise for the "moderation" of the bourgeois Young Turks.

All these fine words, however, are typical of the base bourgeois hypocrisy of Europe's present-day reactionary governments and present-day reactionary bourgeoisie. For the fact is that not a single European country calling itself a democracy, and not a single European bourgeois party professing to be democratic, progressive, Liberal, Radical, etc., has in any way demonstrated a genuine desire to promote the victory and consolidation of the Turkish revolution. On the contrary, they all *fear* its success, for the inev-

itable result of it would be, on the one hand, to foster the desire for autonomy and genuine democracy in all the Balkan nations and, on the other, ensure the victory of the Persian revolution, give fresh impetus to the democratic movement in Asia, intensify the struggle for independence in India, create free institutions along an immense stretch of Russia's frontier—and, consequently, new conditions that would hamper the policy of Black-Hundred tsarism and facilitate the rise of the revolution in Russia, etc.

Essentially, what we see now in the Balkans, Turkey and Persia is a counter-revolutionary coalition of the European powers *against* the mounting tide of democracy in Asia. All the efforts of our governments, all the preaching of the "big" European papers, are aimed at glossing over this fact, misleading public opinion, covering up with hypocritical speeches and diplomatic hocus-pocus the *counter-revolutionary coalition* of the so-called civilised nations of Europe against the nations of Asia, least civilised but most energetic in their striving for democracy. And the very essence of proletarian policy at this stage should be to tear the mask from these bourgeois hypocrites and to reveal to the broadest masses of the people the reactionary character of the European governments who, out of fear of the proletarian struggle at home, are playing, and helping others play, the part of gendarme in relation to the revolution in Asia.

Europe has woven a dense web of intrigue around all the Turkish and Balkan events, and the man in the street is being hoodwinked by the diplomats, who try to divert public attention to trifles, secondary issues, individual aspects of present developments, in an effort to obscure the meaning of the process as a whole. In contrast to this, our task, the task of international Social-Democracy, should be to show the people how these developments are interconnected, to bring out their fundamental trend and underlying motives.

Rivalry among the capitalist powers, anxious to "bite off" as big a piece as they can and extend their possessions and colonies, coupled with fear of an independent democratic movement among the nations dependent on or "protected" by Europe—these are two mainsprings of all European policy. The Young Turks are praised for their moder-



ation and restraint, i.e., the Turkish revolution is being praised because it is weak, because it is not rousing the popular masses to really independent action, because it is hostile to the proletarian struggle beginning in the Ottoman Empire—and at the same time the plunder of Turkey continues. The Young Turks are praised for making it possible to go on plundering Turkish possessions. They praise the Young Turks and continue a policy, the obvious purpose of which is *to partition Turkey*. In this connection the Social-Democratic *Leipziger Volkszeitung* made this very true and apt comment:

“In May 1791, far-sighted statesmen who were really concerned for the well-being of their country carried out a political reform in Poland. The King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria praised the Constitution of May 3, saying it would ‘bring prosperity to a neighbouring country’. The whole world extolled the Polish reformers for practising ‘moderation’, unlike the terrible Jacobins of Paris.... On January 23, 1793, Prussia, Austria and Russia signed a treaty partitioning Poland!

“In August 1908, the Young Turks carried out their political reform with uncommon smoothness. The whole world praised them for practising such respectable ‘moderation’, unlike the terrible socialists of Russia.... Now, in October 1908, we are witnessing a series of developments that presage the partition of Turkey.”

Indeed, it would be childish to believe the *words* of the diplomats and disregard their *deeds*, the collective action of the powers against revolutionary Turkey. The very *fact* that the present developments were preceded by meetings and conversations of the Foreign Ministers and Heads of State of several countries, is enough to dispel this naïve faith in diplomatic statements. In August and September, immediately after the Young Turk revolution and just before the Austrian and Bulgarian declarations, Mr. Izvolsky met King Edward and Premier Clemenceau of the French Republic in Karlsbad and Marienbad; the Austrian and Italian Foreign Minister, von Aehrenthal and Tittoni, met in Salzburg; then came the meetings between Izvolsky and Aehrenthal in Buchloe on September 15; between Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Emperor Franz-Joseph in Budapest; Izvolsky’s meeting with von Schoen, the German Foreign Minister, and later with Tittoni and the King of Italy.

These facts speak for themselves. *All the important*

points had been agreed upon *before* the Austrian and Bulgarian action secretly and directly, at personal meetings of kings and ministers, *between* the six powers: Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, France and Britain. The *subsequent* controversy in the press as to whether Aehrenthal was speaking the truth when he stated that Italy, Germany and Russia had agreed to Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was *a farce from beginning to end, a sheer deception*, that can fool only liberal philistines. The foreign policy directors of the European powers—the Izvolskys, Aehrenthals and the whole gang of crowned robbers and their ministers—purposely threw this bone to the press: go on bickering, gentlemen, over who cheated whom and who affronted whom, whether Austria cheated Russia, or Bulgaria cheated Austria, etc., over who was the “first” to begin tearing up the Berlin Treaty,<sup>18</sup> over the different attitudes to the proposed conference of the powers, and so on and so forth. Please keep public attention preoccupied with these interesting and important—oh, very important!—questions. That is exactly what we need in order to conceal *what really matters*, namely, that we have already come to a preliminary agreement on the main thing, i.e., action against the Young Turk revolution, further steps to partition Turkey, revision of the Dardanelles<sup>19</sup> arrangement on one pretext or another, permission for Russia's Black-Hundred tsar to strangle the Persian revolution. That is the crux of the matter; that is what we, the leaders of the reactionary bourgeoisie of all Europe, really need, and that is what we are doing. As for the liberal simpletons in the press and in parliament, they can spend their time debating how it all began, who said what, and in what guise the policy of colonial plunder and suppression of democratic movements is to be finally signed, sealed and presented to the world.

In each of the European Great Powers—with the exception of Austria, which for the time being is “satiated”—the liberal press is accusing *its* government of inadequate defence of *its* national interests. Everywhere the liberals present their country and their government as the most maladroitness in “utilising” the situation, as having been fooled, etc. And that precisely is the policy of our Cadets too. They have long been saying that Austria's successes make them

"envious" (Mr. Milyukov's own words). This policy of the liberal bourgeoisie in general, and that of our Cadets in particular, is the most revolting hypocrisy, the vilest betrayal of the genuine interests of progress and freedom. For it is a policy which, first, befuddles the democratic consciousness of the masses by hushing up the conspiracy of the reactionary governments. Secondly, it impels every country to follow a so-called active foreign policy, i.e., it sanctions the system of colonial robbery and interference by the powers in Balkan affairs, interference which is always reactionary. Thirdly, it plays directly into the hands of reaction, interesting the people in how much "we" will receive, how much "we" will get out of the booty, how much "we" can bargain for "ourselves". What the reactionary governments need most, at this juncture, is precisely the opportunity to plead that "public opinion" supports their territorial seizures, demands of "compensation", etc. Look, they say, the press of my country accuses me of excessive generosity, of inadequate defence of the national interests, of being too pliable, and it threatens war. Consequently, my demands are most "modest and fair", and must therefore be met in full!

The policy of the Russian Cadets, like that of the European liberal bourgeoisie, is one of subservience to the reactionary governments, defence of colonial aggrandisement and plunder, and interference in the affairs of other countries. The Cadet policy is especially harmful because it is being conducted under the "opposition" flag, and therefore misleads very many, wins the confidence of those who have no faith in the Russian Government and corrupts the masses. Therefore, our Duma<sup>20</sup> deputies and all our Party organisations must bear in mind that we cannot make a single serious step forward in Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation about the Balkan events without revealing—from the *Duma rostrum*, in leaflets and at meetings—the *connection* between the reactionary policy of the autocracy and the hypocritical opposition of the Cadets. We shall never be able to explain to the people how harmful and reactionary the policy of the tsarist government is, unless we explain that Cadet foreign policy is *essentially the same*. We cannot combat chauvinism and the Black-Hundred spirit in foreign policy, unless we combat the

phrase-mongering, the posing, the mental reservations and dodges of the Cadets.

Where concessions to the liberal-bourgeois point of view lead socialists will be seen from the following example. In the well-known opportunist journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (*Socialist—???—Monthly*), Max Schippel has this to say on the Balkan crisis: "Nearly all thinking party members would consider it a mistake if the view which was recently expressed once more in our Berlin Central Organ [*Vorwärts*]<sup>21</sup> prevailed, the view that Germany has nothing to look for in either the present or future revolutions in the Balkans. Certainly, we should not strive for territorial acquisitions. . . . But there can be no doubt that the major realignments of the powers in this area, which is an important connecting link between Europe, the whole of Asia and part of Africa, have a direct bearing on our international position. . . . For the time being the reactionary Russian colossus is of no decisive importance. . . . We have no reason to see in Russia an enemy always and everywhere, as she was regarded by the democrats of the fifties" (S. 1319).

This silly liberal, parading as a socialist, has failed to notice Russia's reactionary intrigues behind her "solicitude" for the "Slav brothers"! By using the words "we" (meaning the German bourgeoisie), "our" position, etc., he has failed to notice either the blow dealt the Young Turk revolution, or Russia's action against the Persian revolution!

Schippel's statement appeared in the October 22 issue of the journal. On October 18 (5), *Novoye Vremya*<sup>22</sup> published a vitriolic article alleging that the "anarchy in Tabriz has reached incredible dimensions" and the city has been "half destroyed and sacked by semi-savage revolutionaries". In other words, the victory of the revolution over the Shah's troops in Tabriz has immediately aroused the fury of the semi-official Russian journal. It describes Sattar Khan, leader of the Persian revolutionary forces, as the "Pugachov of Aderbaijan" (Aderbaijan, or Azerbaijan, is the northern province of Persia and, according to Reclus, accounts for nearly one-fifth of the total population; Tabriz is the capital of the province). "One is entitled to ask," *Novoye Vremya* wrote, "whether Russia can endlessly tolerate these



outrages, which are ruining our lucrative trade on the Persian frontier. . . . It should be borne in mind that all Eastern Transcaucasia and Aderbaijan are an ethnological whole. . . . Tatar semi-intellectuals in Transcaucasia, forgetting that they are Russian subjects, have displayed warm sympathy for the disturbances in Tabriz and are sending volunteers to that city. . . . What is much more important for us is that Aderbaijan, which borders on Russia, should be pacified. Deplorable though it may be, circumstances might compel Russia, despite her strong desire not to interfere, to take this task upon herself."

On October 20, the German *Frankfurter Zeitung* carried a dispatch from St. Petersburg that Russian occupation of Aderbaijan is contemplated by way of "compensation". On October 24 (11), the same paper published a telegram from Tabriz: "*Two days ago six battalions of Russian infantry, supported by cavalry and artillery, crossed the Persian frontier and are today expected in Tabriz.*"

The Russian troops were crossing the Persian frontier on the very day when Max Schippel, slavishly repeating the assurances and the *outcries* of the liberal and police press, was telling the German workers that Russia's importance as a reactionary colossus was now a thing of the past, and that to regard Russia as an enemy under all circumstances would be a mistake!

There is to be a new massacre of Persian revolutionaries by the troops of Nicholas the Bloody. The unofficial Lyakhov is being followed by the official occupation of Aderbaijan, and the repetition in Asia of what Russia did in Europe in 1849, when Nicholas I sent his troops against the Hungarian revolution. At that time there were genuine democrats among the bourgeois parties of Europe, who were capable of fighting for freedom, and not only hypocritically talking about freedom, as all the bourgeois democrats do in our day. Russia had then to play the part of European gendarme against at any rate a few European countries. Today *all* the biggest European powers, not excluding the "democratic" republic of the "red" Clemenceau, mortally afraid as they are of any extension of democracy at home because it would benefit the proletariat, are *helping* Russia play the gendarme in Asia.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that "freedom of



action" for Russia against the Persian revolution was *part of the September reactionary conspiracy*<sup>23</sup> of Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, France and Britain. Whether this was stated in some secret document (which may be published many years hence in a collection of historical materials) or whether it was only intimated by Izvolsky to his most obliging fellow-negotiators, or whether the latter "hinted" that they intended to pass from "occupation" to "annexation", and that the Russians would perhaps like to pass from the Lyakhov policy to "occupation", or whether some other arrangement was made—all that is not of the least importance. What is important is that, however informal, the September counter-revolutionary conspiracy of the powers is *a fact*, the significance of which becomes increasingly clear with every passing day. It is a conspiracy against the proletariat and democracy. It is a conspiracy for directly suppressing the revolution in Asia, or at least for dealing it indirect blows. It is a conspiracy for the continuation of colonial plunder and territorial conquest in the Balkans today, in Persia tomorrow, maybe in Asia Minor and Egypt the day after, etc., etc.

Only the world proletarian revolution can overthrow this combined power of the crowned bandits and international capital. The urgent task of all socialist parties is to intensify agitation among the masses, unmask the diplomats of all countries at their tricks and bring out all the facts for the people to see—the facts revealing the infamous role of *all the allied powers* without exception—both as direct performers of the functions of the gendarme, and as his abettors, friends and financiers.

An extremely onerous, but at the same time extremely noble and momentous task falls now to the Russian Social-Democratic deputies in the Duma, where a statement by Izvolsky and a question by the Cadets and Octobrists<sup>24</sup> are expected. The Social-Democratic deputies are members of a body that is a screen for the policy of the chief reactionary power, the chief plotter of counter-revolution, and they must find in themselves the courage and ability *to tell the whole truth*. At a time like this, the Social-Democratic deputies in the Black-Hundred Duma are people to whom much is given and of whom much is required. For apart from them there is *no one* in the Duma to voice the

protest against tsarism from positions *other* than those of the *Cadets* and *Octobrists*. And a Cadet "protest", at such times and in the present circumstances, is worse than no protest at all since it can be made only *from amidst the selfsame* capitalist wolf-pack, and on behalf of the selfsame wolfish policy.

Our Duma group and all our other Party organisations should therefore set to work at once. Agitation among the masses is now a hundredfold more important than in ordinary times. Three propositions should take first place in all our Party agitation. First, in contrast to the whole of the reactionary and liberal press—from the Black Hundreds to the Cadets—Social-Democrats should expose the diplomatic game of conferences, agreement of the powers, alliances with Britain against Austria, or with Austria against Germany, or any other. Our job is to reveal the *fact* that there exists a reactionary conspiracy of the powers, a conspiracy which the governments are doing everything they possibly can to conceal behind the farce of public negotiations. Our policy should be to denounce this diplomatic farce, bring the truth to the people, expose international anti-proletarian reaction! Secondly, we should reveal the real, as distinct from the asserted, results of this conspiracy, namely, the blow to the Turkish revolution, Russia's assistance in strangling the Persian revolution, interference in the affairs of other nations, and violation of that fundamental democratic principle, the right of nations to self-determination. That right is championed by our programme and the programmes of all the Social-Democratic parties of the world. And there can be nothing more reactionary than the solicitude of the Austrians on the one hand, and the Russian Black Hundreds on the other, for their "Slav brothers". This "solicitude" is being used to screen the vile intrigues that have long won Russia notoriety in the Balkans. This "solicitude" always boils down to encroachments on *genuine* democracy in one Balkan country or another. There is only one sincere way for the powers to show "solicitude" for the Balkan nations, and that is to leave them alone, stop harassing them by foreign interference, stop putting spokes in the wheel of the Turkish revolution. But, of course, the working class cannot expect that kind of policy from the bourgeoisie.

All the bourgeois parties, including the most liberal and "democratic" in name, our Cadets included, support capitalist foreign policy. That is the third thing which the Social-Democrats must with special vigour bring to the knowledge of the people. For, to all intents and purposes, the liberals and Cadets stand for the present rivalry between the capitalist nations, differing with the Black Hundreds only as to the forms this should take, and insisting only on international agreements different from those upon which the government now relies. And this liberal struggle against one variety of bourgeois foreign policy in favour of another variety of that same policy, these liberal reproaches levelled at the government for lagging behind other countries (in rapine and intervention!) have the most corrupting effect on the masses. Down with all colonial policy, down with the whole policy of intervention and capitalist struggle for the conquest of foreign lands and foreign populations, for new privileges, new markets, control of the Straits, etc.! Social-Democrats do not subscribe to the stupid philistine utopia of "peaceful and just" capitalist progress. They struggle against the whole of capitalist society as such, in the knowledge that there is no other champion of peace and liberty in the world than the international revolutionary proletariat.

P.S. After this article had been sent to the press, the papers published a dispatch of the *St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency* denying the report about Russian troops having crossed the Persian border. The dispatch was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of October 24, in the second morning edition. The *third* edition carried a report from Constantinople dated October 24, 10.50 p.m., stating that on the evening of the 24th news of the Russian troops crossing the Persian border had reached Constantinople. The foreign press, *with the exception of the socialist papers*, is so far silent on the Russian invasion of Persia.

To sum up: we are not yet in a position to learn the whole truth. At any rate, the "denials" emanating from the tsarist government and the *St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency* are not, of course, to be trusted. That Russia, with the knowledge of the powers, is fighting the Persian revolution with every means at her command, from intrigue to the sending of troops, is a fact. That her policy is to

occupy Aderbaijan, is likewise beyond doubt. And if the troops have not yet crossed the border, then very probably all the preparations for them to do so have already been made. There is no smoke without fire.

*Proletary*, No. 37,  
October 16 (29), 1908

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 15, pp. 220-30

## From MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST BUREAU<sup>25</sup>

The only subject on the agenda on which a short report was read, and on which there was a discussion of not inconsiderable interest, proved to be the question of colonial reforms. The Dutch delegate van Kol, who made himself famous by his opportunist resolution on the colonial question at Stuttgart, tried in his report by a somewhat different approach to drag in his favourite idea of a "positive" colonial programme for Social-Democracy. Setting aside completely the struggle of Social-Democrats against colonial policy, their agitation among the masses against colonial robbery, the awakening of a spirit of resistance and opposition among the oppressed masses in the colonies, van Kol concentrated all his attention on a list of possible "reforms" of life in the colonies within the present system. Like a benevolent official, he listed a variety of questions, beginning with property in land and ending with schools, encouragement of industry, prisons, etc., all the time underlining the necessity of being as practical as possible—for example, reckoning with the fact that universal suffrage is not always applicable to savages, that sometimes one cannot but agree with the necessity of introducing compulsory labour in the colonies instead of prisons, etc., etc. The whole report was saturated with a spirit, not of proletarian class struggle, but of the most petty-bourgeois—and even worse, bureaucratic—peddling of "reforms". In conclusion he suggested that a committee be appointed from the five main countries possessing colonies to draw up a colonial programme for Social-Democracy.

Molkenbuhr on behalf of the Germans, and some Belgians, tentatively sought to follow van Kol, differing from him only on details—whether a single common pro-



gramme was necessary, wouldn't this be stereotyping, and so forth. This approach to the question served van Kol's purpose, because the very thing he wanted was to reduce everything to "practical details", and to show that "in practice" the differences were smaller than it seemed at Stuttgart. But Kautsky and Ledebour discussed the question in principle, and attacked the fundamental hypocrisy of van Kol's whole position. Van Kol declares, said Kautsky, that in particular cases universal suffrage is inapplicable; therefore, in one form or another he accepts despotism in the colonies, because he does not propose any other electoral system, nor can he do so. Van Kol conceives the possibility of compulsory labour, said Ledebour; therefore, he opens the door to bourgeois policy which uses thousands of different pretexts for preserving slavery in the colonies. Van Kol defended himself extremely stubbornly and extremely badly, asserting for example that sometimes you can't do without taxes in kind, that "he saw this himself in Java", that the Papuans don't know what voting means, that at the elections things are sometimes decided by pure superstition or by getting the voters drunk on rum, etc. Kautsky and Ledebour ridiculed these arguments, asserting that our common democratic programme is unquestionably applicable to the colonies as well, and that it is essential to bring to the fore the struggle against capitalism in the colonies too. Is the superstition of our "educated" Catholics any better than the superstitions of the savages, asked Ledebour. Even if parliamentary and representative institutions are not always applicable, said Kautsky, democracy is always applicable, and the struggle against every departure from democracy is always obligatory. The respective policies of revolutionary and opportunist Social-Democracy were brought out with complete clarity as a result of this discussion, and van Kol, seeing that his motion would undoubtedly receive "a first class funeral", himself withdrew it.

*Proletary*, No. 37,  
October 16 (29), 1908  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 15, pp. 244-46

## From LETTER TO MAXIM GORKY

January 3, 1911

As regards quixotism in the international policy of Social-Democracy, I think, you are wrong. It is the revisionists who have long been asserting that colonial policy is progressive, that it implants capitalism and that therefore it is senseless to "accuse it of greed and cruelty", for "without these qualities" capitalism is "hamstrung".

It would be quixotism and whining if Social-Democrats were to tell the workers that there could be salvation somewhere apart from the development of capitalism, not through the development of capitalism. But we do not say this. We say: capital devours you, will devour the Persians, will devour everyone and go on devouring until you overthrow it. That is the truth. And we do not forget to add: except through the growth of capitalism there is no guarantee of victory over it.

Marxists do not defend a single reactionary *measure*, such as banning trusts, restricting trade, etc. But *to each his own*. Let Khomyakov and Co. build railways across Persia, let them send Lyakhovs, but the job of the Marxists is to *expose* them to the workers. If it devours, say the Marxists, if it strangles, fight back.

*Resistance* to colonial policy and international plunder *by means* of organising the proletariat, *by means* of defending freedom for the proletarian struggle, *does not retard* the development of capitalism but *accelerates* it, forcing it to resort to more civilised, technically higher methods of capitalism. There is capitalism and capitalism. There is Black Hundred-Octoberist capitalism and *Narodnik* ("realistic, democratic", full of "activity") capitalism. The more we *expose* capitalism before the workers for its "greed

and cruelty", the more difficult is it for capitalism of the first order to persist, the more surely is it bound to pass into capitalism of the second order. And this just suits us, this just suits the proletariat. . . .

The international proletariat is pressing capitalism in two ways: by converting Octobrist capitalism into democratic capitalism and, because it drives Octobrist capitalism away *from itself*, by *transplanting* this capitalism to the savages. This, however, enlarges the basis of capitalism and brings its death nearer. There is practically no Octobrist capitalism left in Western Europe; practically all capitalism is democratic. Octobrist capitalism has gone from Britain and France to Russia and Asia. The Russian revolution and the revolutions in Asia = the struggle for ousting Octobrist capitalism and replacing it by democratic capitalism. And democratic capitalism = the last of its kind. It has no next stage to go on to. The next stage is its death.

Sent from Paris  
to the Isle of Capri  
(Italy)

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## **SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE NAME OF THE R.S.D.L.P. AT THE FUNERAL OF PAUL AND LAURA LAFARGUE**

**November 20 (December 3), 1911**

Comrades, on behalf of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party I wish to convey our feelings of deep sorrow on the death of Paul and Laura Lafargue. Even in the period of preparation for the Russian revolution, the class-conscious workers and all Social-Democrats of Russia learned profound respect for Lafargue as one of the most gifted and profound disseminators of the ideas of Marxism, ideas that were so brilliantly confirmed by the class struggle during the Russian revolution and counter-revolution. United under the banner of those ideas, the vanguard of the Russian workers waged an organised mass struggle and dealt a blow to absolutism, it upheld, as it continues to uphold, the cause of socialism, the cause of the revolution, the cause of democracy despite the treachery, vacillation, and irresolution of the liberal bourgeoisie.

For the Russian worker Social-Democrats Lafargue symbolised two eras: the era in which the revolutionary youth of France, animated by republican ideas, marched shoulder to shoulder with the French workers to attack the Empire, and the era in which the French proletariat, under Marxist leadership, waged a sustained class struggle against the entire bourgeois system and prepared for the final battle against the bourgeoisie to win socialism.

We, Russian Social-Democrats, who have experienced all the oppression of an absolutism impregnated with Asiatic barbarity, and who have had the good fortune, through the writings of Lafargue and his friends, directly to draw on the revolutionary experience and revolutionary thought of the European workers—we can now see with particular clarity how rapidly we are nearing the triumph

of the cause to which Lafargue devoted all his life. The Russian revolution ushered in an era of democratic revolutions throughout Asia, and 800 million people are now joining in the democratic movement of the whole of the civilised world. In Europe, too, there are increasing signs that the era of so-called peaceful bourgeois parliamentarianism is drawing to an end, to give place to an era of revolutionary battles by a proletariat that has been organised and educated in the spirit of Marxist ideas, and that will overthrow bourgeois rule and establish a communist system.

*Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 25,  
December 8 (21), 1911

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 17, pp. 304-05



**From the RESOLUTIONS OF THE SIXTH (PRAGUE)  
ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.<sup>26</sup>**

**THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTACK ON PERSIA<sup>27</sup>**

The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party protests against the rapacious policy of the tsarist gang which is bent on suppressing the freedom of the Persian people and, in pursuing this policy, does not shrink from carrying out the most barbarous and infamous acts.

The Conference places on record that the alliance between the Russian and British governments which the Russian liberals are widely advertising and supporting in every way, is directed primarily against the revolutionary movement of the democratic forces in Asia, and that, by virtue of this alliance, the Liberal government of Britain is a party to the bloody atrocities perpetrated by the tsarist government.

The Conference expresses its unqualified sympathy for the struggle waged by the Persian people and, particularly, by the Persian Social-Democratic Party, which has lost so many of its members in the fight against the tsarist butchers.

**THE CHINESE REVOLUTION<sup>28</sup>**

In view of the campaign of propaganda conducted by the government and liberal newspapers (*Rech*) in favour of taking advantage of the revolutionary movement in China in order to annex, in the interests of Russian capitalists, the Chinese provinces bordering on Russia, the Conference recognises the world-wide importance of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people, which is bringing emancipation to Asia and is undermining the rule of the European bourgeoisie. The Conference hails the revolutionary repub-

licans of China, testifies to the profound enthusiasm and complete sympathy with which the proletariat of Russia is following the successes of the revolutionary people of China, and condemns the behaviour of the Russian liberals who are supporting tsarism's policy of conquest.

Written in January 1912

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Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.*

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## DEMOCRACY AND NARODISM IN CHINA

The article by Sun Yat-sen, provisional President of the Chinese Republic, which we take from the Brussels socialist newspaper, *Le Peuple*, is of exceptional interest to us Russians.

It is said that the onlooker sees most of the game. And Sun Yat-sen is a most interesting "onlooker", for he appears to be wholly uninformed about Russia despite his European education. And now, quite independently of Russia, of Russian experience and Russian literature, this enlightened spokesman of militant and victorious Chinese democracy, which has won a republic, poses purely Russian questions. A progressive Chinese democrat, he argues exactly like a Russian. His similarity to a Russian Narodnik<sup>29</sup> is so great that it goes as far as a complete identity of fundamental ideas and of many individual expressions.

The onlooker sees most of the game. The platform of the great Chinese democracy—for that is what Sun Yat-sen's article represents—impels us, and provides us with a convenient occasion, to examine anew, in the light of recent world events, the relation between democracy and Narodism in modern bourgeois revolutions in Asia. This is one of the most serious questions confronting Russia in the revolutionary epoch which began in 1905. And it confronts not only Russia, but the whole of Asia, as will be seen from the platform of the provisional President of the Chinese Republic, particularly when this platform is compared with the revolutionary developments in Russia, Turkey, Persia and China. In very many and very essential respects, Russia is undoubtedly an Asian country and, what is more, one of the most benighted, medieval and shamefully backward of Asian countries.

Beginning with its distant and lone forerunner, the nobleman Herzen, and continuing right up to its mass repre-

sentatives, the members of the Peasant Union<sup>30</sup> of 1905 and the Trudovik<sup>31</sup> deputies to the first three Dumas of 1906-12, Russian bourgeois democracy has had a Narodnik colouring. Bourgeois democracy in China, as we now see, has the same Narodnik colouring. Let us now consider, with Sun Yat-sen as an example, the "social significance" of the ideas generated by the deep-going revolutionary movement of the hundreds of millions who are finally being drawn into the stream of world capitalist civilisation.

Every line of Sun Yat-sen's platform breathes a spirit of militant and sincere democracy. It reveals a thorough understanding of the inadequacy of a "racial" revolution. There is not a trace in it of indifference to political issues, or even of underestimation of political liberty, or of the idea that Chinese "social reform", Chinese constitutional reforms, etc., could be compatible with Chinese autocracy. It stands for complete democracy and the demand for a republic. It squarely poses the question of the condition of the masses, of the mass struggle. It expresses warm sympathy for the toiling and exploited people, faith in their strength and in the justice of their cause.

Before us is the truly great ideology of a truly great people capable not only of lamenting its age-long slavery and dreaming of liberty and equality, but of *fighting* the age-long oppressors of China.

One is naturally inclined to compare the provisional President of the Republic in benighted, inert, Asiatic China with the presidents of various republics in Europe and America, in countries of advanced culture. The presidents in *those* republics are all businessmen, agents or puppets of a bourgeoisie rotten to the core and besmirched from head to foot with mud and blood—not the blood of padishahs and emperors, but the blood of striking workers shot down in the name of progress and civilisation. In those countries the presidents represent the bourgeoisie, which long ago renounced all the ideals of its youth, has thoroughly prostituted itself, sold itself body and soul to the millionaires and multimillionaires, to the feudal lords turned bourgeois, etc.

In China, the Asiatic provisional President of the Republic is a revolutionary democrat, endowed with the nobility and heroism of a class that is rising, not declining,

a class that does not dread the future, but believes in it and fights for it selflessly, a class that does not cling to maintenance and restoration of the past in order to safeguard its privileges, but hates the past and knows how to cast off its dead and stifling decay.

Does that mean, then, that the materialist West has hopelessly decayed and that light shines only from the mystic, religious East? No, quite the opposite. It means that the East has definitely taken the Western path, that new *hundreds of millions* of people will from now on share in the struggle for the ideals which the West has already worked out for itself. What has decayed is the Western bourgeoisie, which is already confronted by its grave-digger, the proletariat. But in Asia there is *still* a bourgeoisie capable of championing sincere, militant, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of France's great men of Enlightenment and great leaders of the close of the eighteenth century.

The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of supporting a historically progressive cause, is the peasant. And side by side with him there already exists a liberal bourgeoisie whose leaders, men like Yüan Shih-kai, are above all capable of treachery: yesterday they feared the emperor, and cringed before him; then they betrayed him when they saw the strength, and sensed the victory, of the revolutionary democracy; and tomorrow they will betray the democrats to make a deal with some old or new "constitutional" emperor.

The real emancipation of the Chinese people from age-long slavery would be impossible without the great, sincerely democratic enthusiasm which is rousing the working masses and making them capable of miracles, and which is evident from every sentence of Sun Yat-sen's platform.

But the Chinese Narodnik combines this ideology of militant democracy, firstly, with socialist dreams, with hopes of China avoiding the capitalist path, of preventing capitalism, and, secondly, with a plan for, and advocacy of, radical agrarian reform. It is these two last ideological and political trends that constitute the element which forms *Narodism* Narodism in the specific sense of that



term, i.e., as distinct from democracy, as a supplement to democracy.

What is the origin and significance of these trends?

Had it not been for the immense spiritual and revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the Chinese democracy would have been unable to overthrow the old order and establish the republic. Such an upsurge presupposes and evokes the most sincere sympathy for the condition of the working masses, and the bitterest hatred for their oppressors and exploiters. And in Europe and America—from which the progressive Chinese, *all* the Chinese who have experienced this upsurge, have borrowed their ideas of liberation—emancipation *from* the bourgeoisie, i.e., socialism, is the immediate task. This is bound to arouse sympathy for socialism among Chinese democrats, and is the source of their *subjective* socialism.

They are subjectively socialists because they are opposed to oppression and exploitation of the masses. But the *objective* conditions of China, a backward, agricultural, semi-feudal country numbering nearly 500 million people, place on the order of the day only one specific, historically distinctive form of this oppression and exploitation, namely, feudalism. Feudalism was based on the predominance of agriculture and natural economy. The source of the feudal exploitation of the Chinese peasant was his *attachment* to the land in some form. The political exponents of this exploitation were the feudal lords, all together and individually, with the emperor as the head of the whole system.

But it appears that out of the subjectively socialist ideas and programmes of the Chinese democrat there emerges in fact a programme for “changing all the juridical foundations” of “immovable property” *alone*, a programme for the abolition of feudal exploitation *alone*.

That is the *essence* of Sun Yat-sen’s Narodism, of his progressive, militant, revolutionary programme for bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform, and of his quasi-socialist theory.

From the point of view of doctrine, this theory is that of a petty-bourgeois “socialist” reactionary. For the idea that capitalism can be “prevented” in China and that a “social revolution” there will be made easier by the coun-

try's backwardness, and so on, is altogether reactionary. And Sun Yat-sen himself, with inimitable, one might say virginal, naïveté, smashes his reactionary Narodnik theory by admitting what reality forces him to admit, namely, that "China is on the eve of a gigantic industrial [i.e., capitalist] development", that in China "trade [i.e., capitalism] will develop to an enormous extent", that "in fifty years we shall have many Shanghais", i.e., huge centres of capitalist wealth and proletarian need and poverty.

But the question arises: does Sun Yat-sen, on the basis of his reactionary economic theory, uphold an actually reactionary agrarian programme? That is the crux of the matter, its most interesting point, and one *on* which curtailed and emasculated liberal quasi-Marxism is often at a loss.

The fact of the matter is that he does not. The dialectics of the social relations in China reveals itself precisely in the fact that, while sincerely sympathising with socialism in Europe, the Chinese democrats have transformed it into a reactionary theory, and *on the basis* of this reactionary theory of "preventing" capitalism are championing a *purely capitalist*, a maximum capitalist, agrarian programme!

Indeed, what does the "economic revolution", of which Sun Yat-sen talks so pompously and obscurely at the beginning of his article, amount to?

It amounts to the transfer of rent to the state, i.e., land nationalisation, by some sort of single tax along Henry George lines. There is absolutely nothing else that is *real* in the "economic revolution" proposed and advocated by Sun Yat-sen.

The difference between the value of land in some remote peasant area and in Shanghai is the difference in the rate of rent. The value of land is capitalised rent. To make the "enhanced value" of land the "property of the people" means transferring the rent, i.e., land ownership, to the state, or, in other words, nationalising the land.

Is such a reform possible within the framework of capitalism? It is not only possible but it represents the purest, most consistent, and ideally perfect capitalism. Marx pointed this out in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, he proved it in detail in Volume III of *Capital*, and developed it with

particular clarity in his controversy with Rodbertus in *Theories of Surplus Value*.

Land nationalisation makes it possible to abolish absolute rent, leaving only differential rent. According to Marx's theory, land nationalisation means a maximum elimination of medieval monopolies and medieval relations in agriculture, maximum freedom in buying and selling land, and maximum facilities for agriculture to adapt itself to the market. The irony of history is that Narodism, under the guise of "combating capitalism" in agriculture, champions an agrarian programme that, if fully carried out, would mean the *most* rapid development of capitalism in agriculture.

What economic necessity is behind the spread of the most progressive bourgeois-democratic agrarian programmes in one of the most backward peasant countries of Asia? It is the necessity of destroying feudalism in all its forms and manifestations.

The more China lagged behind Europe and Japan, the more it was threatened with fragmentation and national disintegration. It could be "renovated" only by the heroism of the revolutionary masses, a heroism capable of creating a Chinese republic in the sphere of politics, and of ensuring, through land nationalisation, the most rapid capitalist progress in the sphere of agriculture.

Whether and to what extent this will succeed is another question. In their bourgeois revolutions, various countries achieved various degrees of political and agrarian democracy, and in the most diverse combinations. The decisive factors will be the international situation and the alignment of the social forces in China. The emperor will certainly try to unite the feudal lords, the bureaucracy and the clergy in an attempt at restoration. Yüan Shih-kai, who represents a bourgeoisie that has only just changed from liberal-monarchist to liberal-republican (for how long?), will pursue a policy of manoeuvring between monarchy and revolution. The revolutionary bourgeois democracy, represented by Sun Yat-sen, is correct in seeking ways and means of "renovating" China through maximum development of the initiative, determination and boldness of the peasant masses in the matter of political and agrarian reforms.

Lastly, the Chinese proletariat will increase as the number of Shanghais increases. It will probably form some kind of Chinese Social-Democratic labour party which, while criticising the petty-bourgeois utopias and reactionary views of Sun Yat-sen, will certainly take care to single out, defend and develop the revolutionary-democratic core of his political and agrarian programme.

*Nevskaya Zvezda* No. 17,  
July 15, 1912  
Signed: *Vl. Ilyin*

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 18, pp. 163-69

## THE END OF THE ITALO-TURKISH WAR<sup>32</sup>

Representatives of Italy and Turkey have signed preliminary terms of peace, according to telegraphic reports.

Italy has "won" the war, which she launched a year ago to seize Turkish possessions in Africa. From now on, Tripoli will belong to Italy. It is worth while taking a look at this typical colonial war, waged by a "civilised" twentieth-century nation.

What caused the war? The greed of the Italian moneybags and capitalists, who need new markets and new achievements for Italian imperialism.

What kind of war was it? A perfected, civilised blood-bath, the massacre of Arabs with the help of the "latest" weapons.

The Arabs put up a desperate resistance. When, at the beginning of the war, the Italian admirals were incautious enough to land 1,200 marines, the Arabs attacked them and killed some 600. By way of "retaliation", about 3,000 Arabs were butchered, whole families were plundered and done to death, with women and children massacred in cold blood. The Italians are a civilised, constitutional nation.

About 1,000 Arabs were hanged.

The Italian casualties exceeded 20,000, including 17,429 sick, 600 missing and 1,405 killed.

The war cost the Italians over 800 million lire, or over 320 million rubles. It resulted in terrible unemployment and industrial stagnation.

The Arabs lost about 14,800 lives. Despite the "peace", the war will actually go on, for the Arab tribes in the heart of Africa, in areas far away from the coast, will refuse to submit. And for a long time to come they will be "civilised" by bayonet, bullet, noose, fire and rape.

Italy, of course, is no better and no worse than the other



capitalist countries. All of them alike are governed by the bourgeoisie, which stops at no carnage in its quest for new sources of profit.

*Pravda* No. 129,  
September 28, 1912

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 18, pp. 337-38

Signed: *T.*

## REGENERATED CHINA

Progressive and civilised Europe shows no interest in the regeneration of China. Four hundred million backward Asians have attained freedom, and have awakened to political life. *One quarter* of the world's population has passed, so to say, from torpor to enlightenment, movement and struggle.

But civilised Europe does not care. To this day even the French Republic has not officially recognised the Republic of China! A question on this subject is to be asked shortly in the French Chamber of Deputies.

Why this indifference on the part of Europe? The explanation is that throughout the West power is in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which is already three-quarters decayed and willing to sell all its "civilisation" to any adventurer for "stringent" measures against the workers, or for an extra five kopeks' profit on the ruble. To this bourgeoisie, China is *only* booty, and now that Russia has taken Mongolia into her "tender embrace",<sup>33</sup> the Japanese, British, Germans, etc., will probably try to tear off a piece of this booty.

But China's regeneration is making speed nevertheless. Parliamentary elections are about to be held—the *first* in what was a despotic state. The Lower House will have 600 members and the "Senate", 274.

Suffrage is *neither* universal *nor* direct. It is granted only to persons above the age of 21 who have resided in the constituency for at least two years and who pay direct taxes amounting to about two rubles, or own property worth about 500 rubles. They will first vote for electors, who will elect the members of parliament.

This kind of suffrage indicates in itself that there is an alliance of the well-to-do peasantry and the bourgeoisie,

there being no proletariat at all or one that is completely powerless.

The same circumstance is evident from the nature of China's political parties. There are three main parties:

(1) The Radical-Socialist Party, which in fact has *nothing at all* to do with socialism, any more than our own Popular Socialists<sup>34</sup> (and nine-tenths of the Socialist-Revolutionaries). It is a party of petty-bourgeois *democrats*, and its chief demands are political unity of China, development of trade and industry "along social lines" (just as hazy a phrase as the "labour principle" and "equalisation" of our Narodniks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), and preservation of peace.

(2) The second party is that of the liberals. They are in alliance with the Radical-Socialists and together with them constitute the *National Party*. This party will in all likelihood win a majority in China's first parliament. Its leader is the well-known Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He is now drawing up a plan for a vast railway network (Russian Narodniks will please note that Sun Yat-sen is doing this *in order that* China may "avoid" a capitalist fate!).

(3) The third party calls itself the Republican League, an example of how deceptive political signboards can be. Actually it is a *conservative* party, backed chiefly by government officials, landlords and the bourgeoisie of *northern* China, which is the most backward part of the country. The National Party, on the other hand, is predominantly a party of the more industrially-developed and progressive *southern* part of the country.

The peasant masses are the mainstay of the National Party. Its leaders are intellectuals who have been educated abroad.

China's freedom was won by an alliance of peasant democrats and the liberal bourgeoisie. Whether the peasants, who are not led by a proletarian party, will be able to retain their democratic positions *against* the liberals, who are only waiting for an opportunity to shift to the right, will be seen in the near future.

## THE HISTORICAL DESTINY OF THE DOCTRINE OF KARL MARX

The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society. Has the course of events all over the world confirmed this doctrine since it was expounded by Marx?

Marx first advanced it in 1844. The *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848, gave an integral and systematic exposition of this doctrine, an exposition which has remained the best to this day. Since then world history has clearly been divided into three main periods: 1) from the revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune (1871); 2) from the Paris Commune to the Russian revolution (1905); 3) since the Russian revolution.

Let us see what has been the destiny of Marx's doctrine in each of these periods.

### I

At the beginning of the first period Marx's doctrine by no means dominated. It was only one of the very numerous groups or trends of socialism. The forms of socialism that did dominate were in the main akin to our Narodism: incomprehension of the materialist basis of historical movement, inability to single out the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, concealment of the bourgeois nature of democratic reforms under diverse, quasi-socialist phrases about the "people", "justice", "right", and so on.

The revolution of 1848 struck a deadly blow at all these vociferous, motley and ostentatious forms of *pre-Marxian* socialism. In all countries, the revolution revealed the various classes of society *in action*. The shooting of the

workers by the republican bourgeoisie in Paris in the June days of 1848 finally revealed that the proletariat *alone* was socialist by nature. The liberal bourgeoisie dreaded the independence of this class a hundred times more than it did any kind of reaction. The craven liberals grovelled before reaction. The peasantry were content with the abolition of the survivals of feudalism and joined the supporters of order, wavering but occasionally between *workers' democracy and bourgeois liberalism*. All doctrines of *non-class socialism and non-class politics* proved to be sheer nonsense.

The Paris Commune (1871) completed this development of bourgeois changes; the republic, i.e., the form of political organisation in which class relations appear in their most unconcealed form, owed its consolidation solely to the heroism of the proletariat.

In all the other European countries, a more tangled and less complete development led to the same result—a bourgeois society that had taken definite shape. Towards the end of the first period (1848-71), a period of storms and revolutions, pre-Marxian socialism was *dead*. Independent *proletarian* parties came into being: the First International (1864-72) and the German Social-Democratic Party.

## II

The second period (1872-1904) was distinguished from the first by its "peaceful" character, by the absence of revolutions. The West had finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East had not yet risen to them.

The West entered a phase of "peaceful" preparations for the changes to come. Socialist parties, basically proletarian, were formed everywhere, and learned to use bourgeois parliamentarism and to found their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their co-operative societies. Marx's doctrine gained a complete victory and *began to spread*. The selection and mustering of the forces of the proletariat and its preparation for the coming battles made slow but steady progress.

The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten within, tried to revive



itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. They interpreted the period of preparing the forces for great battles as renunciation of these battles. Improvement of the conditions of the slaves to fight against wage-slavery they took to mean the sale by the slaves of their right to liberty for a few pence. They cravenly preached "social peace" (i.e., peace with the slave-owners), renunciation of the class struggle, etc. They had very many adherents among socialist members of parliament, various officials of the working-class movement, and the "sympathising" intelligentsia.

### III

However, the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on "social peace" and on the non-necessity of storms under "democracy" when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian revolution was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China. It is in this era of storms and their "repercussions" in Europe that we are now living. No matter what the fate of the great Chinese republic, against which various "civilised" hyenas are now whetting their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

Certain people who were inattentive to the conditions for preparing and developing the mass struggle were driven to despair and to anarchism by the lengthy delays in the decisive struggle against capitalism in Europe. We can now see how short-sighted and faint-hearted this anarchist despair is.

The fact that Asia, with its population of eight hundred million, has been drawn into the struggle for these same European ideals should inspire us with optimism and not despair.

The Asiatic revolutions have again shown us the spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the pronounced demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience both of Europe and Asia, anyone who speaks of *non-class* politics and *non-class* socialism, ought simply to be put in a cage

and exhibited alongside the Australian kangaroo or something like that.

After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, although not in the Asiatic way. The "peaceful" period of 1872-1904 has passed, never to return. The high cost of living and the tyranny of the trusts are leading to an unprecedented sharpening of the economic struggle, which has set into movement even the British workers who have been most corrupted by liberalism. We see a political crisis brewing even in the most "diehard", bourgeois-Junker country, Germany. The frenzied arming and the policy of imperialism are turning modern Europe into a "social peace" which is more like a gunpowder barrel. Meanwhile the decay of *all* the bourgeois parties and the maturing of the proletariat are making steady progress.

Since the appearance of Marxism, each of the three great periods of world history has brought Marxism new confirmation and new triumphs. But a still greater triumph awaits Marxism, as the doctrine of the proletariat, in the coming period of history.

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March 1, 1913

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 18, pp. 582-85

Signed: V. I.

## BIG ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CHINESE REPUBLIC

We know that the great Chinese Republic, established at the cost of such sacrifice by progressive democrats among the Asian masses, recently encountered very grave financial difficulties. The six "Great" Powers, which are considered civilised nations, but which in reality follow the most reactionary policies, formed a financial consortium which suspended the granting of a loan to China.

The point is that the Chinese revolution did not evoke among the European bourgeoisie any enthusiasm for freedom and democracy—only the proletariat can entertain that feeling, which is alien to the knights of profit; it gave rise to the urge to *plunder* China, partition her and take away some of her territories. This "consortium" of the six Powers (Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Japan and the United States) was trying to make China bankrupt in order to weaken and undermine the republic.

The *collapse* of this reactionary consortium is a big success for the young republic, which enjoys the sympathy of the working masses the world over. The President of the United States has announced that his government will no longer support the consortium and will officially *recognise* the Republic of China in the near future. The American banks have now *left* the consortium, and America will give China much-needed financial support, opening the Chinese market to American capital and thereby facilitating the introduction of reforms in China.

Influenced by America, Japan has also changed her policy towards China. At first, Japan would not even allow Sun Yat-sen to enter the country. Now the visit has taken place, and all Japanese democrats enthusiastically welcome an alliance with republican China; the conclusion of that

*alliance* is now on the order of the day. The Japanese bourgeoisie, like the American, has come to realise that it stands to profit more from a policy of peace with China than from a policy of plundering and partitioning the Chinese Republic.

The collapse of this robber consortium is, of course, a defeat of no mean importance for Russia's reactionary foreign policy.

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March 22, 1913

Signed: W.

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 19, pp. 29-30

## CIVILISED EUROPEANS AND SAVAGE ASIANS

The well-known English Social-Democrat, Rothstein, relates in the German labour press an instructive and typical incident that occurred in British India. This incident reveals better than all arguments why the revolution is growing apace in that country with its more than 300 million inhabitants.

Arnold, a British journalist, who brings out a newspaper in Rangoon, a large town (with over 200,000 inhabitants) in one of the Indian provinces, published an article entitled: "A Mockery of British Justice". It exposed a local British judge named Andrew. For publishing this article Arnold was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, but he appealed and, having connections in London, was able to get the case before the highest court in Britain. The Government of India hastily "reduced" the sentence to four months and Arnold was released.

What was all the fuss about?

A British colonel named McCormick had a mistress whose servant was a little eleven-year-old Indian girl, named Aina. This gallant representative of a civilised nation had enticed Aina to his room, raped her and locked her up in his house.

It so happened that Aina's father was dying and he sent for his daughter. It was then that the village where he lived learned the whole story. The population seethed with indignation. The police were compelled to order McCormick's arrest.

But Judge Andrew released him on bail, and later acquitted him following a disgraceful travesty of justice. The gallant colonel declared, as gentlemen of noble extraction usually do under such circumstances, that Aina was a prostitute, in proof of which he brought five witnesses. Eight witnesses, however, brought by Aina's mother were not even examined by Judge Andrew.



When the journalist Arnold was tried for libel, the President of the Court, Sir ("His Worship") Charles Fox, refused to allow him to call witnesses in his defence.

It must be clear to everyone that thousands and millions of such cases occur in India. Only absolutely exceptional circumstances enabled the "libeller" Arnold (the son of an influential London journalist) to get out of prison and secure publicity for the case.

Do not forget that the British Liberals put their "best" people at the head of the Indian administration. Not long ago the Viceroy of India, the chief of the McCormicks, Andrews and Foxes, was John Morley, the well-known radical author, a "luminary of European learning", a "most honourable man" in the eyes of all European and Russian liberals.

The "*European*" spirit has already awakened in Asia, the peoples of Asia have become democratic-minded.

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Signed: W.

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 19, pp. 57-58

## STRUGGLE OF THE PARTIES IN CHINA

The Chinese people have overthrown the old, medieval order and the government which had maintained that order. China has been proclaimed a republic, and the *first Parliament* of that great Asian country, whose immobility and stagnation have so long gladdened the hearts of the Black Hundreds of all nationalities—the first Chinese Parliament has been elected, assembled and begun its sittings several weeks ago.

In the lower chamber of the Chinese Parliament a small majority is enjoyed by supporters of Sun Yat-sen, by the Kuomintang Party, by the “nationalists”; in order to give the essence of this party as applied to Russian reality it must be called a radical people’s republican party, a democratic party. It has a larger majority in the upper chamber.

Opposed to this party are smaller moderate or conservative parties with all sorts of names like “radicals” and so on. In fact *all* these parties are, essentially, parties of *reactionaries*, namely, of bureaucrats, landowners and the reactionary bourgeoisie. All of them support the Chinese Constitutional-Democrat Yüan Shih-kai, the provisional President, who is more and more adopting the ways of a dictator. As becomes a Constitutional-Democrat, he was a monarchist yesterday, and today, when revolutionary democracy has triumphed, he has become a republican—tomorrow he intends to become the head of a monarchist state again, i.e., to betray the republic.

The Sun Yat-sen party has the support of the *south* of China, which is most developed industrially and commercially, which has come under the influence of Europe most of all, and is the most advanced.

The Yüan Shih-kai parties rely on the backward *north* of China.

The first clashes have, for the time being, ended in a victory for Yüan Shih-kai: he has united all the "moderate" (i.e., reactionary) parties, engineered the break away of part of the "nationalists", installed *his own* candidate as chairman of the lower chamber of the Parliament and negotiated a *loan* from "Europe", i.e., from the European billionaire-vultures, *in spite of* the will of the Parliament. The loan has been signed on onerous, frankly usurious terms covered by the revenues from the salt monopoly. This loan will fetter China to the European predatory and most reactionary bourgeoisie, which, where profits are concerned, is prepared to strangle the freedom of any nation. Amounting to some 250 million rubles this loan promises the European capitalists colossal profits.

Here we have an alliance of the European bourgeoisie's reactionary fear of the European working class with the reactionary classes and strata of China.

The struggle against this alliance will not be far from easy for the party of Sun Yat-sen.

In what is this party vulnerable? In the fact that it has as yet *not sufficiently* drawn the *broad masses* of the Chinese people into the revolution. China has a very small working class—and therefore she does not have an advanced class capable of fighting for the completion of the democratic revolution consciously and with determination. Not having a leader in the person of the working class, the peasants are terribly downtrodden, passive, ignorant, and indifferent to politics. Despite the revolutionary overthrow of the old and thoroughly rotten monarchy, despite the triumph of the republic, universal suffrage is *non-existent* in China! The elections to parliament were held on the basis of property qualifications: only those had a vote who owned property valued at not less than about 500 rubles! This too shows how *insufficiently* the really broad masses of the people have been drawn into active support for the Chinese Republic. Without such support by the *masses*, without an organised and staunch advanced class, the republic *cannot be* durable.

Nevertheless, despite the major shortcomings of its leader Sun Yat sen (dreaminess and irresolution born of the lack of proletarian support), revolutionary democracy in China has done very much to awaken the people and secure

freedom and consistently democratic institutions. By drawing ever broader masses of the Chinese peasants into the movement and into politics, this party of Sun Yat-sen is becoming (in proportion to the scale on which this is being done) a great factor of progress in Asia and of human advancement. The work of this party will never go to waste no matter what defeats it may suffer at the hands of political rogues, adventurers and dictators relying on the reactionary forces in the country.

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## THE AWAKENING OF ASIA

Was it so long ago that China was considered typical of the lands that had been standing still for centuries? Today China is a land of seething political activity, the scene of a virile social movement and of a democratic upsurge. Following the 1905 movement in Russia, the democratic revolution spread to the whole of Asia—to Turkey, Persia, China. Ferment is growing in British India.

A significant development is the spread of the revolutionary democratic movement to the Dutch East Indies, to Java and the other Dutch colonies, with a population of some forty million.

First, the democratic movement is developing among the masses of Java, where a nationalist movement has arisen under the banner of Islam. Secondly, capitalism has created a local intelligentsia consisting of acclimatised Europeans who demand independence for the Dutch East Indies. Thirdly, the fairly large Chinese population of Java and the other islands have brought the revolutionary movement from their native land.

Describing this awakening of the Dutch East Indies, van Ravesteyn, a Dutch Marxist, points out that the age-old despotism and tyranny of the Dutch Government now meet with resolute resistance and protest from the masses of the native population.

The usual events of a pre revolutionary period have begun. Parties and unions are being founded at amazing speed. The government is banning them, thereby only fanning the resentment and accelerating the growth of the movement. Recently, for example, it dissolved the "Indian Party" because its programme and rules spoke of the striving for *independence*. The Dutch *Derzhimordas*<sup>35</sup> (with the approval, incidentally, of the clericals and liberals - Euro-



pean liberalism is rotten to the core!) regarded this clause as a criminal attempt at separation from the Netherlands! The dissolved party was, of course, revived under a different name.

A National Union of the native population has been formed in Java. It already has a membership of 80,000 and is holding mass meetings. There is no stopping the growth of the democratic movement.

World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia have finally aroused Asia. Hundreds of millions of the down-trodden and benighted have awakened from medieval stagnation to a new life and are rising to fight for elementary human rights and democracy.

The workers of the advanced countries follow with interest and inspiration this powerful growth of the liberation movement, in all its various forms, in every part of the world. The bourgeoisie of Europe, scared by the might of the working-class movement, is embracing reaction, militarism, clericalism and obscurantism. But the proletariat of the European countries and the young democracy of Asia, fully confident of its strength and with abiding faith in the masses, are advancing to take the place of this decadent and moribund bourgeoisie.

The awakening of Asia and the beginning of the struggle for power by the advanced proletariat of Europe are a symbol of the new phase in world history that began early this century.

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May 7, 1913

Signed: *F.*

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 19, pp. 85-86

## THE WORKING CLASS AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Russia is a motley country as far as her nationalities are concerned. Government policy, which is the policy of the landowners supported by the bourgeoisie, is steeped in Black-Hundred nationalism.

This policy is spearheaded against the *majority* of the peoples of Russia who constitute the *majority* of her population. And alongside this we have the bourgeois nationalism of other nations (Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.), raising its head and trying to *divert* the working class from its great world-wide tasks by a national struggle or a struggle for national culture.

The national question must be clearly considered and solved by all class-conscious workers.

When the bourgeoisie was fighting for freedom together with the people, together with all those who labour, it stood for full freedom and equal rights for the nations. Advanced countries, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and others, provide us with an example of how free nations under a really democratic system live together in peace or separate peacefully from each other.

Today the bourgeoisie fears the workers and is seeking an alliance with the Purishkeviches, with the reactionaries, and is betraying democracy, advocating oppression or unequal rights among nations and corrupting the workers with *nationalist* slogans.

In our times the proletariat alone upholds the real freedom of nations and the unity of workers of all nations.

For different nations to live together in peace and freedom or to separate and form different states (if that is more convenient for them), a full democracy, upheld by the working class, is essential. No privileges for any nation

or any one language! Not even the slightest degree of oppression or the slightest injustice in respect of a national minority—such are the principles of working-class democracy.

The capitalists and landowners want, at all costs, to keep the workers of different nations apart while the powers that be live splendidly together as shareholders in profitable concerns involving millions (such as the Lena Gold-fields);<sup>36</sup> Orthodox Christians and Jews, Russians and Germans, Poles and Ukrainians, everyone who possesses *capital*, exploit the workers of all nations in company.

Class-conscious workers stand for *full unity* among the workers of all nations in every educational, trade union, political, etc., workers' organisation. Let the Cadet gentlemen disgrace themselves by denying or belittling the importance of equal rights for Ukrainians. Let the bourgeoisie of all nations find comfort in lying phrases about national culture, national tasks, etc., etc.

The workers will not allow themselves to be disunited by sugary speeches about national culture, or "national-cultural autonomy".<sup>37</sup> The workers of all nations together, concertedly, uphold full freedom and complete equality of rights in organisations common to all—and that is the guarantee of genuine culture.

The workers of the whole world are building up their own internationalist culture, which the champions of freedom and the enemies of oppression have for long been preparing. To the old world, the world of national oppression, national bickering, and national isolation the workers counterpose a new world, a world of the unity of the working people of all nations, a world in which there is no place for any privileges or for the slightest degree of oppression of man by man.

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*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 19, pp. 91-92

## BACKWARD EUROPE AND ADVANCED ASIA

The comparison sounds like a paradox. Who does not know that Europe is advanced and Asia backward? But the words taken for this title contain a bitter truth.

In civilised and advanced Europe, with its highly developed machine industry, its rich, multiform culture and its constitutions, a point in history has been reached when the commanding bourgeoisie, fearing the growth and increasing strength of the proletariat, comes out in support of everything backward, moribund and medieval. The bourgeoisie is living out its last days, and is joining with all obsolete and obsolescent forces in an attempt to preserve tottering wage-slavery.

Advanced Europe is commanded by a bourgeoisie which supports everything that is backward. The Europe of our day is advanced not *thanks to*, but *in spite of*, the bourgeoisie, for it is only the proletariat that is adding to the million-strong army of fighters for a better future. It alone preserves and spreads implacable enmity towards backwardness, savagery, privilege, slavery and the humiliation of man by man.

In "advanced" Europe, the *sole advanced* class is the proletariat. As for the living bourgeoisie, it is prepared to go to any length of savagery, brutality and crime in order to uphold dying capitalist slavery.

And a more striking example of this decay of the *entire* European bourgeoisie can scarcely be cited than the support it is lending to *reaction* in Asia in furtherance of the selfish aims of the financial manipulators and capitalist swindlers.

Everywhere in Asia a mighty democratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining in strength. The bourgeoisie there is *as yet* siding with the people against reaction.

*Hundreds* of millions of people are awakening to life, light and freedom. What delight this world movement is arousing in the hearts of all class-conscious workers, who know that the path to collectivism lies through democracy! What sympathy for young Asia imbues all honest democrats!

And "advanced" Europe? It is plundering China and helping the foes of democracy, the foes of freedom in China!

Here is a simple but instructive little calculation. A new Chinese loan has been concluded *against* Chinese democracy: "Europe" is *for* Yüan Shih-kai, who is preparing a military dictatorship. Why does it support him? Because it is good business. The loan has been concluded for about 250,000,000 rubles, at the rate of 84 to a 100. That means that the bourgeois of "Europe" will *pay* the Chinese 210,000,000 rubles, but will take from the public 225,000,000 rubles. There you have at one stroke—a clear profit of *fifteen million rubles* in a few weeks! It really is a "*clear*" profit, isn't it?

What if the Chinese people do not recognise the loan? China, after all, is a republic, and the majority in parliament are *against* the loan.

Oh, then "advanced" Europe will raise a cry about "civilisation", "order", "culture" and "fatherland"! It will set the *guns* in motion and, in alliance with Yüan Shih-kai, that adventurer, traitor and friend of reaction, crush a republic in "backward" Asia.

All the commanders of Europe, all the European bourgeoisie are *in alliance* with all the forces of reaction and medievalism in China.

But all young Asia, that is, the hundreds of millions of Asian working people, has a reliable ally in the proletariat of all civilised countries. No force on earth can prevent its victory, which will liberate both the peoples of Europe and the peoples of Asia.

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## From THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Clause 9 of the Russian Marxists' Programme, which deals with the right of nations to self-determination, has (as we have already pointed out in *Prosveshcheniye*)\* given rise lately to a crusade on the part of the opportunists. The Russian liquidator<sup>38</sup> Semkovsky, in the St. Petersburg liquidationist newspaper, and the Bundist<sup>39</sup> Liebman and the Ukrainian nationalist-socialist Yurkevich in their respective periodicals have violently attacked this clause and treated it with supreme contempt. There is no doubt that this campaign of a motley array of opportunists against our Marxist Programme is closely connected with present-day nationalist vacillations in general. Hence we consider a detailed examination of this question timely. We would mention, in passing, that none of the opportunists named above has offered a single argument of his own; they all merely repeat what Rosa Luxemburg said in her lengthy Polish article of 1908-09, "The National Question and Autonomy". In our exposition we shall deal mainly with the "original" arguments of this last-named author.

### 1. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS?

Naturally, this is the first question that arises when any attempt is made at a Marxist examination of what is known as self-determination. What should be understood by that term? Should the answer be sought in legal definitions deduced from all sorts of "general concepts" of law? Or is it rather to be sought in a historico-economic study of the national movements?

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\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 17-51.—Ed.

It is not surprising that the Semkovskys, Liebmans and Yurkeviches did not even think of raising this question, and shrugged it off by scoffing at the "obscurity" of the Marxist Programme, apparently unaware, in their simplicity, that the self-determination of nations is dealt with, not only in the Russian Programme of 1903,<sup>40</sup> but in the resolution of the London International Congress of 1896<sup>41</sup> (with which I shall deal in detail in the proper place). Far more surprising is the fact that Rosa Luxemburg, who declaims a great deal about the supposedly abstract and metaphysical nature of the clause in question, should herself succumb to the sin of abstraction and metaphysics. It is Rosa Luxemburg herself who is continually lapsing into generalities about self-determination (to the extent even of philosophising amusingly on the question of how the will of the nation is to be ascertained), without anywhere clearly and precisely asking herself whether the gist of the matter lies in legal definitions or in the experience of the national movements throughout the world.

A precise formulation of this question, which no Marxist can avoid, would at once destroy nine-tenths of Rosa Luxemburg's arguments. This is not the first time that national movements have arisen in Russia, nor are they peculiar to that country alone. Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is

towards the formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is *typical* and normal for the capitalist period.

Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.

Later on we shall see still other reasons why it would be wrong to interpret the right to self-determination as meaning anything but the right to existence as a separate state. At present, we must deal with Rosa Luxemburg's efforts to "dismiss" the inescapable conclusion that profound economic factors underlie the urge towards a national state.

Rosa Luxemburg is quite familiar with Kautsky's pamphlet *Nationality and Internationality*. (Supplement to *Die Neue Zeit* No. 1, 1907-08; Russian translation in the journal *Nauchnaya Mysl*, Riga, 1908.) She is aware that, after carefully analysing the question of the national state in §4 of that pamphlet, Kautsky\* arrived at the conclusion that Otto Bauer "*underestimates* the strength of the urge towards a national state" (p. 23 of the pamphlet). Rosa Luxemburg herself quotes the following words of Kautsky's: "The national state is the form *most suited* to present-day conditions [i.e., capitalist, civilised, economically progressive conditions, as distinguished from medieval, pre-capitalist, etc.]; it is the form in which the state can best fulfil its tasks" (i.e., the tasks of securing the freest, widest and speediest development of capitalism). To this we must add

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\* In 1916, while preparing the article for a new publication, Lenin gave the following note: "The reader should bear in mind that in 1909 prior to the appearance of his famous pamphlet, *The Road to Power*, Kautsky was an enemy of opportunism and that only in 1910-11" he first came out in defence of it, which he most resolutely supported in 1914-16.

Kautsky's still more precise concluding remark that states of mixed national composition (known as multi-national states, as distinct from national states) are "always those whose internal constitution has for some reason or other remained abnormal or underdeveloped" (backward). Needless to say, Kautsky speaks of abnormality exclusively in the sense of lack of conformity with what is best adapted to the requirements of a developing capitalism.

The question now is: How did Rosa Luxemburg treat these historico-economic conclusions of Kautsky's? Are they right or wrong? Is Kautsky right in his historico-economic theory, or is Bauer, whose theory is basically psychological? What is the connection between Bauer's undoubted "national opportunism", his defence of cultural-national autonomy, his nationalistic infatuation ("an occasional emphasis on the national aspect", as Kautsky put it), his "enormous exaggeration of the national aspect and complete neglect of the international aspect" (Kautsky)—and his underestimation of the strength of the urge to create a national state?

Rosa Luxemburg has not even raised this question. She has not noticed the connection. She has not considered the *sum total* of Bauer's theoretical views. She has not even drawn a line between the historico-economic and the psychological theories of the national question. She confines herself to the following remarks in criticism of Kautsky:

"This 'best' national state is only an abstraction, which can easily be developed and defended theoretically, but which does not correspond to reality." (*Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny*, 1908, No. 6, p. 499.)

And in corroboration of this emphatic statement there follow arguments to the effect that the "right to self-determination" of small nations is made illusory by the development of the great capitalist powers and by imperialism. "Can one seriously speak," Rosa Luxemburg exclaims, "about the 'self-determination' of the formally independent Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Serbs, Greeks, partly even the Swiss, whose independence is itself a result of the political struggle and the diplomatic game of the 'concert of Europe'?" (P. 500.) The state that best suits these conditions is "not a national state, as Kautsky

believes, but a predatory one". Some dozens of figures are quoted relating to the size of British, French and other colonial possessions.

After reading such arguments, one cannot help marveling at the author's ability to misunderstand *the how and the why of things*. To teach Kautsky, with a serious mien, that small states are economically dependent on big ones, that a struggle is raging among the bourgeois states for the predatory suppression of other nations, and that imperialism and colonies exist—all this is a ridiculous and puerile attempt to be clever, for none of this has the slightest bearing on the subject. Not only small states, but even Russia, for example, is entirely dependent, economically, on the power of the imperialist finance capital of the "rich" bourgeois countries. Not only the miniature Balkan states, but even nineteenth-century America was, economically, a colony of Europe, as Marx pointed out in *Capital*.<sup>42</sup> Kautsky, like any Marxist, is, of course, well aware of this, but that has nothing whatever to do with the question of national movements and the national state.

For the question of the political self-determination of nations and their independence as states in bourgeois society, Rosa Luxemburg has substituted the question of their economic independence. This is just as intelligent as if someone, in discussing the programmatic demand for the supremacy of parliament, i.e., the assembly of people's representatives, in a bourgeois state, were to expound the perfectly correct conviction that big capital dominates in a bourgeois country, whatever the regime in it.

There is no doubt that the greater part of Asia, the most densely populated continent, consists either of colonies of the "Great Powers", or of states that are extremely dependent and oppressed as nations. But does this commonly-known circumstance in any way shake the undoubted fact that in Asia itself the conditions for the most complete development of commodity production and the freest, widest and speediest growth of capitalism have been created only in Japan, i.e., only in an independent national state? The latter is a bourgeois state, and for that reason has itself begun to oppress other nations and to enslave colonies. We cannot say whether Asia will have had time to develop into a system of independent national states, like Europe,



before the collapse of capitalism, but it remains an undisputed fact that capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in that continent, too; that the tendency of these movements is towards the creation of national states in Asia; that it is such states that ensure the best conditions for the development of capitalism. The example of Asia speaks *in favour* of Kautsky and *against* Rosa Luxemburg.

The example of the Balkan states likewise contradicts her, for anyone can now see that the best conditions for the development of capitalism in the Balkans are created precisely in proportion to the creation of independent national states in that peninsula.

Therefore, Rosa Luxemburg notwithstanding, the example of the whole of progressive and civilised mankind, the example of the Balkans and that of Asia prove that Kautsky's proposition is absolutely correct: the national state is the rule and the "norm" of capitalism; the multi-national state represents backwardness, or is an exception. From the standpoint of national relations, the best conditions for the development of capitalism are undoubtedly provided by the national state. This does not mean, of course, that such a state, which is based on bourgeois relations, can eliminate the exploitation and oppression of nations. It only means that Marxists cannot lose sight of the powerful *economic* factors that give rise to the urge to create national states. It means that "self-determination of nations" in the Marxists' Programme *cannot*, from a historico-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state.

The conditions under which the bourgeois-democratic demand for a "national state" should be supported from a Marxist, i.e., class-proletarian, point of view will be dealt with in detail below. For the present, we shall confine ourselves to the definition of the *concept* of "self-determination", and only note that Rosa Luxemburg *knows* what this concept means ("national state"), whereas her opportunist partisans, the Liebmans, the Semkovskys, the Yurkeviches, *do not even know that!*

## 2. THE HISTORICALLY CONCRETE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION

The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw *all* classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.

Of course, the two periods are not walled off from each other; they are connected by numerous transitional links, the various countries differing from each other in the ra-

pidity of their national development, in the national make-up and distribution of their population, and so on. There can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national programme without taking into account all these general historical and concrete state conditions.

It is here that we come up against the weakest point in Rosa Luxemburg's arguments. With extraordinary zeal, she embellishes her article with a collection of hard words directed against §9 of our Programme, which she declares to be "sweeping", "a platitude", "a metaphysical phrase", and so on without end. It would be natural to expect an author who so admirably condemns metaphysics (in the Marxist sense, i.e., anti-dialectics) and empty abstractions to set us an example of how to make a concrete historical analysis of the question. The question at issue is the national programme of the Marxists of a definite country—Russia, in a definite period—the beginning of the twentieth century. But does Rosa Luxemburg raise the question as to *what historical period* Russia is passing through, or *what are the concrete* features of the national question and the national movements of that *particular* country in that *particular* period?

No, she does not! *She says absolutely nothing about it!* In her work you will not find even the shadow of an analysis of how the national question stands in *Russia* in the present historical period, or of the specific features of *Russia* in this particular respect!

We are told that the national question in the Balkans is presented differently from that in Ireland; that Marx appraised the Polish and Czech national movements in the concrete conditions of 1848 in such and such a way (a page of excerpts from Marx); that Engels appraised the struggle of the forest cantons of Switzerland against Austria and the Battle of Morgarten which took place in 1315 in such and such a way (a page of quotations from Engels with the appropriate comments from Kautsky); that Lassalle regarded the peasant war in Germany of the sixteenth century as reactionary, etc.

It cannot be said that these remarks and quotations have any novelty about them, but at all events it is interesting for the reader to be occasionally reminded just how Marx, Engels and Lassalle approached the analysis of concrete

historical problems in individual countries. And a perusal of these instructive quotations from Marx and Engels reveals most strikingly the ridiculous position Rosa Luxemburg has placed herself in. She preaches eloquently and angrily the need for a concrete historical analysis of the national question in different countries at different times, but she *does not make the least* attempt to determine *what* historical stage in the development of capitalism *Russia* is passing through at the beginning of the twentieth century, or what the *specific features* of the national question in this country are. Rosa Luxemburg gives examples of how *others* have treated the question in a Marxist fashion, as if deliberately stressing how often the road to hell is paved with good intentions and how often good counsel covers up unwillingness or inability to follow such advice in practice.

Here is one of her edifying comparisons. In protesting against the demand for the independence of Poland, Rosa Luxemburg refers to a pamphlet she wrote in 1898, proving the rapid "industrial development of Poland", with the latter's manufactured goods being marketed in Russia. Needless to say, no conclusion whatever can be drawn from this on the question of the *right* to self-determination; it only proves the disappearance of the old Poland of the landed gentry, etc. But Rosa Luxemburg always passes on imperceptibly to the conclusion that among the factors that unite Russia and Poland, the purely economic factors of modern capitalist relations now predominate.

Then our Rosa proceeds to the question of autonomy, and though her article is entitled "The National Question and Autonomy" *in general*, she begins to argue that the Kingdom of Poland has an *exclusive* right to autonomy (see *Prosveshcheniye*, 1913, No.12\*). To support Poland's right to autonomy, Rosa Luxemburg evidently judges the state system of Russia by her economic, political and sociological characteristics and everyday life—a totality of features which, taken together, produce the concept of "Asiatic despotism". (*Przeglad* No. 12, p. 137.)

It is generally known that this kind of state system possesses great stability whenever completely patriarchal and pre capitalist features predominate in the economic system

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\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 45-51.—Ed.

and where commodity production and class differentiation are scarcely developed. However, if in a country whose state system is distinctly *pre-capitalist* in character there exists a nationally demarcated region where capitalism is *rapidly* developing, then the more rapidly that capitalism develops, the greater will be the antagonism between it and the *pre-capitalist* state system, and the more likely will be the separation of the progressive region from the whole—with which it is connected, not by “modern capitalistic”, but by “Asiatically despotic” ties.

Thus, Rosa Luxemburg does not get her arguments to hang together even on the question of the social structure of the government in Russia with regard to bourgeois Poland; as for the concrete, historical, specific features of the national movements in Russia—she does not even raise that question.

That is a point we must now deal with.

### **3. THE CONCRETE FEATURES OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN RUSSIA, AND RUSSIA'S BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REFORMATION**

“Despite the elasticity of the principle of ‘the right of nations to self-determination’, which is a mere platitude, and, obviously, equally applicable, not only to the nations inhabiting Russia, but also to the nations inhabiting Germany and Austria, Switzerland and Sweden, America and Australia, we do not find it in the programmes of any of the present-day socialist parties...” (*Przegląd* No. 6, p. 483.)

This is how Rosa Luxemburg opens her attack upon §9 of the Marxist programme. In trying to foist on us the conception that this clause in the programme is a “mere platitude”, Rosa Luxemburg herself falls victim to this error, alleging with amusing boldness that this point is, “obviously, equally applicable” to Russia, Germany, etc.

Obviously, we shall reply, Rosa Luxemburg has decided to make her article a collection of errors in logic that could be used for schoolboy exercises. For Rosa Luxemburg’s tirade is sheer nonsense and a mockery of the historically concrete presentation of the question.

If one interprets the Marxist programme in Marxist fashion, not in a childish way, one will without difficulty grasp the fact that it refers to bourgeois-democratic nation-



al movements. That being the case, it is "obvious" that this programme "sweepingly", and as a "mere platitude", etc., covers *all* instances of bourgeois-democratic national movements. No less obvious to Rosa Luxemburg, if she gave the slightest thought to it, is the conclusion that our programme refers *only* to cases where such a movement is actually in existence.

Had she given thought to these obvious considerations, Rosa Luxemburg would have easily perceived what nonsense she was talking. In accusing *us* of uttering a "platitude" she has used *against us* the argument that no mention is made of the right to self-determination in the programmes of countries where there are *no* bourgeois-democratic national movements. A remarkably clever argument!

A comparison of the political and economic development of various countries, as well as of their Marxist programmes, is of tremendous importance from the standpoint of Marxism, for there can be no doubt that all modern states are of a common capitalist nature and are therefore subject to a common law of development. But such a comparison must be drawn in a sensible way. The elementary condition for comparison is to find out whether the historical periods of development of the countries concerned are at all *comparable*. For instance, only absolute ignoramuses (such as Prince Y. Trubetskoi in *Russkaya Mysl*<sup>43</sup>) are capable of "comparing" the Russian Marxists' agrarian programme with the programmes of Western Europe, since our programme replies to questions that concern the *bourgeois-democratic* agrarian reform, whereas in the Western countries no such question arises.

The same applies to the national question. In most Western countries it was settled long ago. It is ridiculous to seek an answer to non-existent questions in the programmes of Western Europe. In this respect Rosa Luxemburg has lost sight of the most important thing—the difference between countries where bourgeois-democratic reforms have long been completed, and those where they have not.

The crux of the matter lies in this difference. Rosa Luxemburg's complete disregard of it transforms her verbose article into a collection of empty and meaningless platitudes.

The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western, continental Europe embraces a fairly definite period, approximately between 1789 and 1871. This was precisely the period of national movements and the creation of national states. When this period drew to a close, Western Europe had been transformed into a settled system of bourgeois states, which, as a general rule, were nationally uniform states. Therefore, to seek the right to self-determination in the programmes of West-European socialists at this time of day is to betray one's ignorance of the ABC of Marxism.

In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905. The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey and China, the Balkan wars<sup>44</sup>—such is the chain of world events of *our* period in our "Orient". And only a blind man could fail to see in this chain of events the awakening of a *whole series* of bourgeois-democratic national movements which strive to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states. It is precisely and solely because Russia and the neighbouring countries are passing through this period that we must have a clause in our programme on the right of nations to self-determination.

## 7. THE RESOLUTION OF THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, 1896

This resolution reads:

"This Congress declares that it stands for the full right of all nations to self-determination [*Selbstbestimmungsrecht*] and expresses its sympathy for the workers of every country now suffering under the yoke of military, national or other absolutism. This Congress calls upon the workers of all these countries to join the ranks of the class-conscious [*Klassenbewusste*—those who understand their class interests] workers of the whole world in order jointly to fight for the defeat of international capitalism and for the achievement of the aims of international Social-Democracy."\*

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\* See the official German report of the London Congress: *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des internationalen sozialistischen Arbeiter- und Gewerkschafts-Kongresses zu London, vom 27. Juli bis 1. August 1896*, Berlin 1896, S.18. A Russian pamphlet has been published containing the decisions of international congresses in which the word "self-determination" is wrongly translated as "autonomy".

As we have already pointed out, our opportunists—Semkovsky, Liebman and Yurkevich—are simply unaware of this resolution. But Rosa Luxemburg knows it and quotes the full text, which contains the same expression as that contained in our programme, viz., “self-determination”.

How does Rosa Luxemburg remove this obstacle from the path of her “original” theory?

Oh, quite simply . . . the whole emphasis lies in the second part of the resolution . . . its declarative character . . . one can refer to it only by mistake!

The feebleness and utter confusion of our author are simply amazing. Usually it is only the opportunists who talk about the consistent democratic and socialist points in the programme being mere declarations, and cravenly avoid an open debate on them. It is apparently not without reason that Rosa Luxemburg has this time found herself in the deplorable company of the Semkovskys, Liebmans and Yurkeviches. Rosa Luxemburg does not venture to state openly whether she regards the above resolution as correct or erroneous. She shifts and shuffles as if counting on the inattentive or ill-informed reader, who forgets the first part of the resolution by the time he has started reading the second, or who has never heard of the discussion that took place in the socialist press *prior* to the London Congress.

Rosa Luxemburg is greatly mistaken, however, if she imagines that, in the sight of the class-conscious workers of Russia, she can get away with trampling upon the resolution of the International on such an important fundamental issue, without even deigning to analyse it critically.

Rosa Luxemburg’s point of view was voiced during the discussions which took place prior to the London Congress, mainly in the columns of *Die Neue Zeit*, organ of the German Marxists; *in essence this point of view was defeated in the International!* That is the crux of the matter, which the Russian reader must particularly bear in mind.

The debate turned on the question of Poland’s independence. Three points of view were put forward:

1. That of the “Fracy”,<sup>45</sup> in whose name Haecker spoke. They wanted the International to include in *its own* programme a demand for the independence of Poland. The motion was not carried and this point of view was defeated in the International.

2. Rosa Luxemburg's point of view, viz., the Polish socialists should not demand independence for Poland. This point of view entirely precluded the proclamation of the right of nations to self-determination. It was likewise defeated in the International.

3. The point of view which was elaborated at the time by K. Kautsky, who opposed Rosa Luxemburg and proved that her materialism was extremely "one-sided"; according to Kautsky, the International could not at the time make the independence of Poland a point in its programme; but the Polish socialists were fully entitled to put forward such a demand. From the socialists' point of view it was undoubtedly a mistake to ignore the tasks of national liberation in a situation where national oppression existed.

The International's resolution reproduces the most essential and fundamental propositions in this point of view: on the one hand, the absolutely direct, unequivocal recognition of the full right of all nations to self-determination; on the other hand, the equally unambiguous appeal to the workers for *international* unity in their class struggle.

We think that this resolution is absolutely correct, and that, to the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is this resolution, with both its parts being taken as an integral whole, that gives the only correct lead to the proletarian class policy in the national question.

Let us deal with the three above-mentioned viewpoints in somewhat greater detail.

As is known, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels considered it the bounden duty of the whole of West-European democracy, and still more of Social-Democracy, to give active support to the demand for Polish independence. For the period of the 1840s and 1860s, the period of the bourgeois revolutions in Austria and Germany, and the period of the "Peasant Reform" in Russia,<sup>46</sup> this point of view was quite correct and the only one that was consistently democratic and proletarian. So long as the masses of the people in Russia and in most of the Slav countries were still sunk in torpor, so long as *there were no* independent, mass, democratic movements in those countries, the liberation movement of the *gentry* in Poland assumed an immense and paramount importance from the point of view, not



only of Russian, not only of Slav, but of European democracy, as a whole.\*

But while Marx's standpoint was quite correct for the forties, fifties and sixties or for the third quarter of the nineteenth century, it has ceased to be correct by the twentieth century. Independent democratic movements, and even an independent proletarian movement, have arisen in most Slav countries, even in Russia, one of the most backward Slav countries. Aristocratic Poland has disappeared, yielding place to capitalist Poland. Under such circumstances Poland could not but lose her *exceptional* revolutionary importance.

The attempt of the P.S.P. (the Polish Socialist Party, the present-day "Fracy") in 1896 to "establish" for all time the point of view Marx had held in a *different epoch* was an attempt to use the *letter* of Marxism against the *spirit* of Marxism. The Polish Social-Democrats were therefore quite right in attacking the extreme nationalism of the Polish petty bourgeoisie and pointing out that the national question was of secondary importance to Polish workers, in creating for the first time a purely proletarian party in Poland and proclaiming the extremely important principle that the Polish and the Russian workers must maintain the closest alliance in their class struggle.

But did this mean that at the beginning of the twentieth century the International could regard the principle of political self-determination of nations, or the right to secede, as unnecessary to Eastern Europe and Asia? This would have been the height of absurdity, and (theoretically) tantamount to admitting that the bourgeois-democratic reform of the Turkish, Russian and Chinese states had been con-

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\* It would be a very interesting piece of historical research to compare the position of a noble Polish rebel in 1863 with that of the all-Russia revolutionary democrat, Chernyshevsky, who (like Marx), was able to appreciate the importance of the Polish movement, and with that of the Ukrainian petty bourgeois Dragomanov, who appeared much later and expressed the views of a peasant, so ignorant and sluggish, and so attached to his dung heap, that his legitimate hatred of the Polish gentry blinded him to the significance which their struggle had for all-Russia democracy. (Cf. Dragomanov, *Historical Poland and Great-Russian Democracy*.) Dragomanov richly deserved the fervent kisses which were subsequently bestowed on him by Mr. P. B. Struve, who by that time had become a national-liberal.



summed; indeed it would have been tantamount (in practice) to opportunism towards absolutism.

No. At a time when bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and Asia have begun, in this period of the awakening and intensification of national movements and of the formation of independent proletarian parties, the task of these parties with regard to national policy must be twofold: recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination, since bourgeois-democratic reform is not yet completed and since working-class democracy consistently, seriously and sincerely (and not in a liberal, Kokoshkin fashion) fights for equal rights for nations; then, a close, unbreakable alliance in the class struggle of the proletarians of all nations in a given state, throughout all the changes in its history, irrespective of any reshaping of the frontiers of the individual states by the bourgeoisie.

It is this twofold task of the proletariat that the 1896 resolution of the International formulates. That is the substance, the underlying principle, of the resolution adopted by the Conference of Russian Marxists held in the summer of 1913. Some people profess to see a "contradiction" in the fact that while point 4 of this resolution, which recognises the right to self-determination and secession, seems to "concede" the maximum to nationalism (in reality, the recognition of the *right of all* nations to self-determination implies the maximum of *democracy* and the minimum of nationalism), point 5 warns the workers against the nationalist slogans of the bourgeoisie of any nation and demands the unity and amalgamation of the workers of all nations in internationally united proletarian organisations. But this is a "contradiction" only for extremely shallow minds, which, for instance, cannot grasp why the unity and class solidarity of the Swedish and the Norwegian proletariat *gained* when the Swedish workers upheld Norway's freedom to secede and form an independent state.

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Signed: V. Ilyin

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**P a r t   T w o**

**1914-1917**



## ON THE NATIONAL PRIDE OF THE GREAT RUSSIANS

What a lot of talk, argument and vociferation there is nowadays about nationality and the fatherland! Liberal and radical cabinet ministers in Britain, a host of "forward-looking" journalists in France (who have proved in full agreement with their reactionary colleagues), and a swarm of official, Cadet and progressive scribblers in Russia (including several Narodniks and "Marxists")—all have effusive praise for the liberty and independence of their respective countries, the grandeur of the principle of national independence. Here one cannot tell where the venal eulogist of the butcher Nicholas Romanov or of the brutal oppressors of Negroes and Indians ends, and where the common philistine, who from sheer stupidity or spinelessness drifts with the stream, begins. Nor is that distinction important. We see before us an extensive and very deep ideological trend, whose origins are closely interwoven with the interests of the landowners and the capitalists of the dominant nations. Scores and hundreds of millions are being spent every year for the propaganda of ideas advantageous to those classes: it is a pretty big mill-race that takes its waters from all sources—from Menshikov, a chauvinist by conviction, to chauvinists for reason of opportunism or spinelessness, such as Plekhanov and Maslov, Rubanovich and Smirnov, Kropotkin and Burtsev.

Let us, Great-Russian Social-Democrats, also try to define our attitude to this ideological trend. It would be unseemly for us, representatives of a dominant nation in the far east of Europe and a goodly part of Asia, to forget the immense significance of the national question—especially in a country which has been rightly called the "prison of the peoples", and particularly at a time when, in the far east of Europe and in Asia, capitalism is awakening to life and



self-consciousness a number of "new" nations, large and small; at a moment when the tsarist monarchy has called up millions of Great Russians and non-Russians, so as to "solve" a number of national problems in accordance with the interests of the Council of the United Nobility<sup>47</sup> and of the Guchkovs, Krestovnikovs, Dolgorukovs, Kutlers and Rodichevs.

Is a sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not! We love our language and our country, and we are doing our very utmost to raise *her* toiling masses (i.e., nine-tenths of *her* population) to the level of a democratic and socialist consciousness. To us it is most painful to see and feel the outrages, the oppression and the humiliation our fair country suffers at the hands of the tsar's butchers, the nobles and the capitalists. We take pride in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst, from the Great Russians; in *that* midst having produced Radishchev, the Decembrists<sup>48</sup> and the revolutionary commoners of the seventies; in the Great-Russian working class having created, in 1905, a mighty revolutionary party of the masses; and in the Great-Russian peasantry having begun to turn towards democracy and set about overthrowing the clergy and the landed proprietors.

We remember that Chernyshevsky, the Great-Russian democrat, who dedicated his life to the cause of revolution, said half a century ago: "A wretched nation, a nation of slaves, from top to bottom—all slaves."<sup>49</sup> The overt and covert Great-Russian slaves (slaves with regard to the tsarist monarchy) do not like to recall these words. Yet, in our opinion, these were words of genuine love for our country, a love distressed by the absence of a revolutionary spirit in the masses of the Great-Russian people. There was none of that spirit at the time. There is little of it now, but it already exists. We are full of national pride because the Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class, because it, *too*, has proved capable of providing mankind with great models of the struggle for freedom and socialism, and not only with great pogroms, rows of gallows, dungeons, great famines and great servility to priests, tsars, land-owners and capitalists.

We are full of a sense of national pride, and for that very

reason we *particularly* hate *our* slavish past (when the landed nobility led the peasants into war to stifle the freedom of Hungary, Poland, Persia and China), and our slavish present, when these selfsame landed proprietors, aided by the capitalists, are leading us into a war in order to throttle Poland and the Ukraine, crush the democratic movement in Persia and China, and strengthen the gang of Romanovs, Bobrinskys and purishkeviches, who are a disgrace to our Great-Russian national dignity. Nobody is to be blamed for being born a slave; but a slave who not only eschews a striving for freedom but justifies and eulogises his slavery (e.g., calls the throttling of Poland and the Ukraine, etc., a "defence of the fatherland" of the Great Russians)—such a slave is a lickspittle and a boor, who arouses a legitimate feeling of indignation, contempt, and loathing.

"No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations,"<sup>50</sup> said Marx and Engels, the greatest representatives of consistent nineteenth-century democracy, who became the teachers of the revolutionary proletariat. And, full of a sense of national pride, we Great-Russian workers want, come what may, a free and independent, a democratic, republican and proud Great Russia, one that will base its relations with its neighbours on the human principle of equality, and not on the feudalist principle of privilege, which is so degrading to a great nation. Just because we want that, we say: it is impossible, in the twentieth century and in Europe (even in the far east of Europe), to "defend the fatherland" otherwise than by using every revolutionary means to combat the monarchy, the landowners and the capitalists of one's *own* fatherland, i.e., the *worst* enemies of our country. We say that the Great Russians cannot "defend the fatherland" otherwise than by desiring the defeat of tsarism in any war, this as the lesser evil to nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Great Russia. For tsarism not only oppresses those nine-tenths economically and politically, but also demoralises, degrades, dishonours and prostitutes them by teaching them to oppress other nations and to cover up this shame with hypocritical and quasi-patriotic phrases.

The objection may be advanced that, besides tsarism and under its wing, another historical force has arisen and become strong, viz., Great-Russian capitalism, which is

carrying on progressive work by economically centralising and welding together vast regions. This objection, however, does not excuse, but on the contrary still more condemns our socialist-chauvinists, who should be called tsarist-Purishkevich socialists (just as Marx called the Lassalleans Royal-Prussian socialists). Let us even assume that history will decide in favour of Great-Russian dominant-nation capitalism, and against the hundred and one small nations. That is not impossible, for the entire history of capital is one of violence and plunder, blood and corruption. We do not advocate preserving small nations at all costs; *other conditions being equal*, we are decidedly for centralisation and are opposed to the petty-bourgeois ideal of federal relationships. Even if our assumption were true, however, it is, firstly, not our business, or that of democrats (let alone of socialists), to help Romanov-Bobrinsky-Purishkevich throttle the Ukraine, etc. In his own Junker fashion, Bismarck accomplished a progressive historical task, but he would be a fine "Marxist" indeed who, on such grounds, thought of justifying socialist support for Bismarck! Moreover, Bismarck promoted economic development by bringing together the disunited Germans, who were being oppressed by other nations. The economic prosperity and rapid development of Great Russia, however, require that the country be liberated from Great-Russian oppression of other nations—that is the difference that our admirers of the true-Russian would-be Bismarcks overlook.

Secondly, if history were to decide in favour of Great-Russian dominant-nation capitalism, it follows hence that the *socialist* role of the Great-Russian proletariat, as the principal driving force of the communist revolution engendered by capitalism, will be all the greater. The proletarian revolution calls for a prolonged education of the workers in the spirit of the *fullest* national equality and brotherhood. Consequently, the interests of the Great-Russian proletariat require that the masses be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionary manner—complete equality and the right to self-determination for all the nations oppressed by the Great Russians. The interests of the Great Russians' national pride (understood not in the slavish sense) coincide with the *socialist* interests of the Great-Russian (and all other)

proletarians. Our model will always be Marx, who, after living in Britain for decades and becoming half-English, demanded freedom and national independence for Ireland in the interests of the socialist movement of the British workers.

In the second hypothetical case we have considered, our home-grown socialist-chauvinists, Plekhanov, etc., etc., will prove traitors, not only to their own country—a free and democratic Great Russia, but also to the proletarian brotherhood of all the nations of Russia, i.e., to the cause of socialism.

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## From the Article UNDER A FALSE FLAG

...Let us suppose that two countries are at war in the epoch of bourgeois, national liberation movements. Which country should we wish success to from the standpoint of present-day democracy? Obviously, to that country whose success will give a greater impetus to the bourgeoisie's liberation movement, make its development more speedy, and undermine feudalism the more decisively. Let us further suppose that the *determining* feature of the objective historical situation has changed, and that the place of capital striving for national liberation has been taken by international, reactionary and imperialist finance capital. The former country, let us say, possesses three-fourths of Africa, whereas the latter possesses one-fourth. A repartition of Africa is the objective content of their war. To which side should we wish success? It would be absurd to state the problem in its previous form, since we do not possess the old criteria of appraisal: there is neither a bourgeois liberation movement running into decades, nor a long process of the decay of feudalism. It is not the business of present-day democracy either to help the former country to assert its "right" to three-fourths of Africa, or to help the latter country (even if it is developing economically more rapidly than the former) to take over those three-fourths.

Present-day democracy will remain true to itself only if it joins neither one nor the other imperialist bourgeoisie, only if it says that the two sides are equally bad, and if it wishes the defeat of the imperialist bourgeoisie in every country. Any other decision will, in reality, be national-liberal and have nothing in common with genuine internationalism.

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Signed: N. Konstantinov



## From THE QUESTION OF PEACE

The slogan of self-determination of nations should also be advanced *in connection* with the imperialist era of capitalism. We do not stand for the *status quo*, or for the philistine Utopia of *standing aside* in great wars. We stand for a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, i.e., capitalism. Imperialism consists in a striving of nations that oppress a number of other nations to extend and increase that oppression and to repartition the colonies. That is why the question of self-determination of nations today *hinges* on the conduct of socialists of the *oppressor* nations. A socialist of any of the *oppressor* nations (Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, the United States of America, etc.) who does not recognise and does not struggle for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination (i.e., the right to secession) is in reality a chauvinist, not a socialist.

Only this point of view can lead to a sincere and consistent struggle against imperialism, to a proletarian, not a philistine approach (today) to the national question. Only this point of view can lead to a consistent application of the principle of combating any form of the oppression of nations; it removes mistrust among the proletarians of the oppressor and oppressed nations, makes for a united international struggle for the socialist revolution (i.e., for the only accomplishable regime of complete national equality), as distinct from the philistine Utopia of freedom for all small states in general, under capitalism.

This is the point of view adopted by our Party, i.e., by those Social-Democrats of Russia who have rallied around the Central Committee. This was the point of view adopted by Marx when he taught the proletariat that "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations". It was from this point of view that Marx demanded the separation of Ireland from Britain, this in the interests of the freedom movement, not only of the Irish, but especially of the *British* workers.

If the socialists of Britain do not recognise and uphold

Ireland's right to secession, if the French do not do the same for Italian Nice, the Germans for Alsace-Lorraine, Danish Schleswig, and Poland, the Russians for Poland, Finland, the Ukraine, etc., and the Poles for the Ukraine—if all the socialists of the “Great” Powers, i.e., the great robber powers, do not uphold that right in respect of the colonies, it is solely because they are in fact imperialists, not socialists. It is ridiculous to cherish illusions that people who do *not* fight for “the right to self-determination” of the oppressed nations, while they themselves belong to the oppressor nations, are capable of practising socialist policies.

Instead of leaving it to the hypocritical phrase-mongers to deceive the people by phrases and promises concerning the possibility of a democratic peace, socialists must explain to the masses the impossibility of anything resembling a democratic peace, unless there are a series of revolutions and unless a revolutionary struggle is waged in every country against the *respective* government. Instead of allowing the bourgeois politicians to deceive the peoples with talk about the freedom of nations, socialists must explain to the masses in the *oppressor* nations that they cannot hope for their liberation, as long as they help oppress other nations, and do not recognise and uphold the right of those nations to self-determination, i.e., the freedom to secede. That is the socialist, as distinct from the imperialist, policy to be applied to all countries, on the question of peace and the national question. True, this line is in most cases incompatible with the laws punishing high treason—but so is the Basle resolution,<sup>51</sup> which has been so shamefully betrayed by almost all the socialists of the oppressor nations.

The choice is between socialism and submission to the laws of Joffre and Hindenburg, between revolutionary struggle and servility to imperialism. There is no middle course. The greatest harm is caused to the proletariat by the hypocritical (or obtuse) authors of the “middle course” policy.

Written in July-August 1915

Signed: *Lenin*

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**From SOCIALISM AND WAR**  
**THE ATTITUDE**  
**OF THE R.S.D.L.P. TOWARDS THE WAR**

*Chapter I*

**THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM  
AND THE WAR OF 1914-15**

**THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIALISTS TOWARDS WARS**

Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country; we understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created; we also differ in that we regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against land-owners, and by wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war historically (from the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism) and separately. There have been in the past numerous wars which, despite all the horrors, atrocities, distress and suffering that inevitably accompany all wars, were progressive, i.e., benefited the development of mankind by helping to destroy most harmful and reactionary institutions (e.g., an autocracy or serfdom) and the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (the Turkish and the Russian). That is why the features historically specific to the present war must come up for examination.

## THE HISTORICAL TYPES OF WARS IN MODERN TIMES

The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time down to the Paris Commune, i.e., between 1789 and 1871, one type of war was of a bourgeois-progressive character, waged for national liberation. In other words, the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the undermining of these institutions, and the overthrow of alien oppression, formed the chief content and historical significance of such wars. These were therefore progressive wars; during *such* wars, all honest and revolutionary democrats, as well as all socialists, always wished success to that country (i.e., that bourgeoisie) which had helped to overthrow or undermine the most baneful foundations of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of other nations. For example, the revolutionary wars waged by France contained an element of plunder and the conquest of foreign territory by the French, but this does not in the least alter the fundamental historical significance of those wars, which destroyed and shattered feudalism and absolutism in the whole of the old, serf-owning Europe. In the Franco-Prussian war, Germany plundered France but this does not alter the fundamental historical significance of that war, which liberated tens of millions of German people from feudal disunity and from the oppression of two despots, the Russian tsar and Napoleon III.

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WARS OF AGGRESSION AND OF DEFENCE

The period of 1789-1871 left behind it deep marks and revolutionary memories. There could be no development of the proletarian struggle for socialism prior to the overthrow of feudalism, absolutism and alien oppression. When, in speaking of the wars of *such* periods, socialists stressed the legitimacy of "defensive" wars, they always had these aims in mind, namely revolution against medievalism and serfdom. By a "defensive" war socialists have always understood a "*just*" war in this particular sense (Wilhelm Liebknecht once expressed himself precisely in this way). It is only in this sense that socialists have always regarded wars "for the defence of the fatherland", or "defensive"

wars, as legitimate, progressive and just. For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be "just", and "defensive" wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory "Great" Powers.

But imagine a slave-holder who owns 100 slaves warring against another who owns 200 slaves, for a more "just" redistribution of slaves. The use of the term of a "defensive" war, or a war "for the defence of the fatherland", would clearly be historically false in such a case and would in practice be sheer deception of the common people, philistines, and the ignorant, by the astute slave-holders. It is in this way that the peoples are being deceived with "national" ideology and the term of "defence of the fatherland", by the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie, in the war now being waged between slave-holders with the purpose of consolidating slavery.

### **THE WAR OF TODAY IS AN IMPERIALIST WAR**

It is almost universally admitted that this war is an imperialist war. In most cases, however, this term is distorted, or applied to one side, or else a loophole is left for the assertion that this war may, after all, be bourgeois-progressive, and of significance to the national liberation movement. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, reached only in the twentieth century. Capitalism now finds that the old national states, without whose formation it could not have overthrown feudalism, are too cramped for it. Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that entire branches of industry are controlled by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist multimillionaires and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the "lords of capital" either in the form of colonies, or by entangling other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation. Free trade and competition have been superseded by a striving towards monopolies, the seizure of territory for the investment of capital and as sources of raw materials, and so on. From the liberator of nations, which it was in the struggle against feu-



dalism, capitalism in its imperialist stage has turned into the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of adopting socialism or of experiencing years and even decades of armed struggle between the "Great" Powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind.

### **A WAR BETWEEN THE BIGGEST SLAVE-HOLDERS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND CONSOLIDATION OF SLAVERY**

To make the significance of imperialism clear, we will quote precise figures showing the partition of the world among the so-called "Great" Powers (i.e., those successful in great plunder).

Hence it will be seen that, since 1876, most of the nations which were foremost fighters for freedom in 1789-1871 have, on the basis of a highly developed and "over-mature" capitalism, become oppressors and enslavers of most of the population and the nations of the globe. From 1876 to 1914, six "Great" Powers grabbed 25 million square kilometres, i.e., an area two and a half times that of Europe! Six Powers have enslaved *523 million* people in the colonies. For every four inhabitants in the "Great" Powers there are five in "their" colonies. It is common knowledge that colonies are conquered with fire and sword, that the population of the colonies are brutally treated, and that they are exploited in a thousand ways (by exporting capital, through concessions, etc., cheating in the sale of goods, submission to the authorities of the "ruling" nation, and so on and so forth). The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are deceiving the people when they say that they are waging a war for the freedom of nations and of Belgium; in fact they are waging a war for the purpose of retaining the colonies they have grabbed and robbed. The German imperialists would free Belgium, etc., at once if the British and French would agree to "fairly" share their colonies with them. A feature of the situation is that in this war the fate of the colonies is being decided by a war on the Continent. From the standpoint of bourgeois justice and national freedom (or the right of na-

*Partition of the World Among the "Great" Slave-holding Powers*

"Great" Powers	Colonies				Metropolis		Total	
	1876		1914		1914			
	Square kilometres	Population	Square kilometres	Population	Square kilometres	Population	Square kilometres	Population
	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions
Britain . . . . .	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
Russia . . . . .	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
France . . . . .	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
Germany . . . . .	—	—	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
Japan . . . . .	—	—	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
United States of America . . . . .	—	—	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
Total for the six "Great" Powers	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6
Colonies belonging to <i>other</i> than "Great" Powers (Belgium, Holland and other states) . . . . .			9.9	45.3			9.9	45.3
Three "semi-colonial" countries (Turkey, China and Persia) . . . . .							14.5	361.2
<i>Total</i> . . . . .							105.9	1,367.1
Other states and countries . . . . .							28.0	289.9
Entire globe (exclusive of Arctic and Antarctic regions) . . . . .								
<i>Grand Total</i> . . . . .							133.9	1,657.0

tions to existence), Germany might be considered absolutely in the right as against Britain and France, for she has been "done out" of colonies, her enemies are oppressing an

immeasurably far larger number of nations than she is, and the Slavs that are being oppressed by her ally, Austria, undoubtedly enjoy far more freedom than those of tsarist Russia, that veritable "prison of nations". Germany, however, is fighting, not for the liberation of nations, but for their oppression. It is not the business of socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to plunder the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow all of them. To be able to do this, socialists must first of all tell the people the truth, namely, that this war is, in three respects, a war between slave-holders with the aim of consolidating slavery. This is a war, firstly, to increase the enslavement of the colonies by means of a "more equitable" distribution and subsequent more concerted exploitation of them; secondly, to increase the oppression of other nations within the "Great" Powers, since *both* Austria *and* Russia (Russia in greater degree and with results far worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to increase and prolong wage slavery, since the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists are the gainers, making fortunes out of the war, fanning national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries, even in the freest and most republican.

**"WAR IS THE CONTINUATION OF POLITICS BY OTHER"  
(I.E.: VIOLENT) "MEANS"**

This famous dictum was uttered by Clausewitz, one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war. It was from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded the various wars.

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of Britain and France, Germany and Italy, Austria and Russia have pursued a policy of plundering colonies, oppressing other nations, and suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this, policy that is being continued in the present war. In particular, the

policy of both Austria and Russia, in peacetime as well as in wartime, is a policy of enslaving nations, not of liberating them. In China, Persia, India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to a national life, of their liberation from the reactionary "Great" Powers' oppression. A war waged on such a historical basis can even today be a bourgeois-progressive war of national liberation.

If the present war is regarded as a continuation of the politics of the "Great" Powers and of the principal classes within them, a glance will immediately reveal the glaring anti-historicity, falseness and hypocrisy of the view that the "defence-of-the-fatherland" idea can be justified in the present war.

### THE CASE OF BELGIUM

The favourite plea of the social-chauvinists of the Triple (now Quadruple) Entente (in Russia, Plekhanov and Co.) is the case of Belgium. This instance, however, speaks against them. The German imperialists have brazenly violated the neutrality of Belgium, as belligerent states have done always and everywhere, trampling upon *all* treaties and obligations if necessary. Let us suppose that all states interested in the observance of international treaties should declare war on Germany with the demand that Belgium be liberated and indemnified. In that case, the sympathies of socialists would, of course, be with Germany's enemies. But the whole point is that the Triple (and Quadruple) Entente is waging war, *not* over Belgium: this is common knowledge and only hypocrites will disguise the fact. Britain is grabbing at Germany's colonies and Turkey; Russia is grabbing at Galicia and Turkey, France wants Alsace-Lorraine and even the left bank of the Rhine; a treaty has been concluded with Italy for the division of the spoils (Albania and Asia Minor); bargaining is going on with Bulgaria and Rumania, also for the division of the spoils. In the present war waged by the governments of today, it is *impossible* to help Belgium *otherwise* than by helping to throttle Austria or Turkey, etc.! Where does "defence of the fatherland" come in here? Herein lies the specific feature of imperialist war,

a war between reactionary-bourgeois and historically outmoded governments, waged for the purpose of oppressing other nations. Whoever justifies participation in the present war is perpetuating the imperialist oppression of nations. Whoever advocates taking advantage of the present embarrassments of the governments so as to fight for the social revolution is championing the real freedom of really all nations, which is possible only under socialism.

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## ON THE SLOGAN FOR A UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

In No. 40 of *Sotsial-Demokrat* we reported that a conference of our Party's groups abroad had decided to defer the question of the "United States of Europe" slogan pending a discussion, in the press, on the *economic* aspect of the matter.\*

At our conference the debate on this question assumed a purely political character. Perhaps this was partly caused by the Central Committee's Manifesto having formulated this slogan as a forthright political one ("the immediate *political* slogan. . .", as it says there); not only did it advance the slogan of a republican United States of Europe, but expressly emphasised that this slogan is meaningless and false "without the revolutionary overthrow of the German, Austrian and Russian monarchies".

It would be quite wrong to object to such a presentation of the question *within the limits* of a political appraisal of this slogan—e.g., to argue that it obscures or weakens, etc., the slogan of a socialist revolution. Political changes of a truly democratic nature, and especially political revolutions, can under no circumstances whatsoever either obscure or weaken the slogan of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, they always bring it closer, extend its basis, and draw new sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the semi-proletarian masses into the socialist struggle. On the other hand, political revolutions are inevitable in the course of the socialist revolution, which should not be regarded as a single act, but as a period of turbulent political and economic upheavals, the most intense class struggle, civil war, revolutions, and counter-revolutions.

But while the slogan of a republican United States of Europe—if accompanied by the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies in Europe, headed

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 158.—Ed.

by the Russian—is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, there still remains the highly important question of its economic content and significance. From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the “advanced” and “civilised” colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

Capital has become international and monopolist. The world has been carved up by a handful of Great Powers, i.e., powers successful in the great plunder and oppression of nations. The four Great Powers of Europe—Britain, France, Russia and Germany, with an aggregate population of between 250,000,000 and 300,000,000, and an area of about 7,000,000 square kilometres—possess colonies with a population of *almost 500 million* (494,500,000) and an area of 64,600,000 square kilometres, i.e., almost half the surface of the globe (133,000,000 square kilometres, exclusive of Arctic and Antarctic regions). Add to this the three Asian states—China, Turkey and Persia, now being rent piecemeal by thugs that are waging a war of “liberation”, namely, Japan, Russia, Britain and France. Those three Asian states, which may be called semi-colonies (in reality they are now 90 per cent colonies), have a total population of 360,000,000 and an area of 14,500,000 square kilometres (almost one and a half times the area of all Europe).

Furthermore, Britain, France and Germany have invested capital abroad to the value of no less than 70,000 million rubles. The business of securing “legitimate” profits from this tidy sum—these exceed 3,000 million rubles annually—is carried out by the national committees of the millionaires, known as governments, which are equipped with armies and navies and which provide the sons and brothers of the millionaires with jobs in the colonies and semi-colonies as viceroys, consuls, ambassadors, officials of all kinds, clergymen, and other leeches.

That is how the plunder of about a thousand million of the earth’s population by a handful of Great Powers is organised in the epoch of the highest development of capitalism. No other organisation is possible under capitalism. Renounce colonies, “spheres of influence”, and the export of capital? To think that it is possible means coming down to the level of some snivelling parson who every Sunday

preaches to the rich on the lofty principles of Christianity and advises them to give the poor, well, if not millions, at least several hundred rubles yearly.

A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. A multimillionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone otherwise than "in proportion to the capital invested" (with a bonus thrown in, so that the biggest capital may receive more than its share). Capitalism is private ownership of the means of production, and anarchy in production. To advocate a "just" division of income on such a basis is sheer Proudhonism,<sup>52</sup> stupid philistinism. No division can be effected otherwise than in "proportion to strength", and strength changes with the course of economic development. Following 1871, the rate of Germany's accession of strength was three or four times as rapid as that of Britain and France, and of Japan about ten times as rapid as Russia's. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real might of a capitalist state than by war. War does not contradict the fundamentals of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable outcome of those fundamentals. Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists ... but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the United States of America, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of

reaction to retard America's more rapid development. The times when the cause of democracy and socialism was associated only with Europe alone have gone for ever.

A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the unification and freedom of nations which we associate with socialism—until the time when the complete victory of communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organising their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world—the capitalist world—attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of a society wherein the proletariat is victorious in overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic, which will more and more concentrate the forces of the proletariat of a given nation or nations, in the struggle against states that have not yet gone over to socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without a dictatorship of the oppressed class, of the proletariat. A free union of nations in socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states.

It is for these reasons and after repeated discussions at the conference of R.S.D.L.P. groups abroad, and following that conference, that the Central Organ's editors<sup>53</sup> have come to the conclusion that the slogan for a United States of Europe is an erroneous one.

## From THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Like most programmes or tactical resolutions of the Social-Democratic parties, the Zimmerwald Manifesto<sup>54</sup> proclaims the "right of nations to self-determination". In Nos. 252 and 253 of *Berner Tagwacht*,<sup>55</sup> Parabellum has called "illusory" "the struggle for the non-existent right to self-determination", and *has contraposed* to it "the proletariat's revolutionary mass struggle against capitalism", while at the same time *assuring* us that "we are against annexations" (an assurance is repeated *five* times in Parabellum's article), and against all violence against nations.

The arguments advanced by Parabellum in support of his position boil down to an assertion that today all national problems, like those of Alsace-Lorraine, Armenia, etc., are problems of imperialism; that capital has outgrown the framework of national states; that it is impossible to turn the clock of history back to the obsolete ideal of national states, etc.

Let us see whether Parabellum's reasoning is correct.

First of all, it is Parabellum who is looking backward, not forward, when, in opposing working-class acceptance "of the ideal of the national state", he looks towards Britain, France, Italy, Germany, i.e., countries where the movement for national liberation is a thing of the past, and not towards the East, towards Asia, Africa, and the colonies, where this movement is a thing of the present and the future. Mention of India, China, Persia, and Egypt will be sufficient.

Furthermore, imperialism means that capital has outgrown the framework of national states; it means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation. Hence, it follows that, despite Parabellum, we must *link* the revolutionary struggle for



socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question.

From what Parabellum says, it appears that, *in the name of* the socialist revolution, he scornfully rejects a consistently revolutionary programme in the sphere of democracy. He is wrong to do so. The proletariat cannot be victorious except through democracy, i.e., by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of its struggle democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms. It is absurd to *contrapose* the socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to a *single* problem of democracy, in this case, the national question. We must *combine* the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on *all* democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands—all of them—can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism. the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the *complete* and *all-round* institution of *all* democratic reforms. Some of these reforms will be started before the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others *in the course* of that overthrow, and still others after it. The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period covering a series of battles over all sorts of problems of economic and democratic reform, which are consummated only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It is for the sake of this final aim that we must formulate *every one* of our democratic demands in a consistently revolutionary way. It is quite conceivable that the workers of some particular country will overthrow the bourgeoisie *before* even a single fundamental democratic reform has been fully achieved. It is, however, quite inconceivable that the proletariat, as a historical class, will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie, unless it is prepared for that by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy.

Imperialism means the progressively mounting oppres-

sion of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers; it means a period of wars between the latter to extend and consolidate the oppression of nations; it means a period in which the masses of the people are deceived by hypocritical social-patriots, i.e., individuals who, *under the pretext* of the "freedom of nations", "the right of nations to self-determination", and "defence of the fatherland", justify and defend the oppression of the majority of the world's nations by the Great Powers.

That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the *essence* of imperialism, and is *deceitfully* evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. It is from this division that *our* definition of the "right of nations to self-determination" must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and *in accord* with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism. It is for that right, and in a struggle to achieve sincere recognition for it, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession, for otherwise recognition of equal rights for nations and of international working-class solidarity would in fact be merely empty phrase-mongering, sheer hypocrisy. On the other hand, the Social-Democrats of the oppressed nations must attach prime significance to the unity and the merging of the workers of the oppressed nations with those of the oppressor nations; otherwise these Social-Democrats will involuntarily become the allies of their own national *bourgeoisie*, which *always* betrays the interests of the people and of democracy, and is *always* ready, in its turn, to annex territory and oppress other nations.

The way in which the national question was posed at the end of the sixties of the past century may serve as an instructive example. The petty-bourgeois democrats, to whom any thought of the class struggle and of the socialist revolution was wholly alien, pictured to them-

selves a Utopia of peaceful competition among free and equal nations, under capitalism. In examining the immediate tasks of the social revolution, the Proudhonists totally "negated" the national question and the right of nations to self-determination. Marx ridiculed French Proudhonism and showed the affinity between it and French chauvinism. ("All Europe must and will sit quietly on their hindquarters until the gentlemen in France abolish 'poverty' . . . . By the negation of nationalities they appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption by the model French nation.") Marx demanded *the separation of Ireland* from Britain "although after the separation there may come federation", demanding it, not from the standpoint of the petty-bourgeois Utopia of a peaceful capitalism, or from considerations of "justice for Ireland", but from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of the *oppressor, i.e., British, nation* against capitalism. The freedom of *that* nation has been cramped and mutilated by the fact that it has oppressed another nation. The *British* proletariat's internationalism would remain a hypocritical phrase if *they* did not demand the separation of Ireland. Never in favour of petty states, or the splitting up of states in general, or the principle of federation, Marx considered the separation of an oppressed nation to be a step towards federation, and consequently, not towards a split, but towards concentration, both political and economic, but concentration on the basis of democracy.<sup>56</sup> As Parabellum sees it, Marx was probably waging an "illusory struggle" in demanding separation for Ireland. Actually, however, this demand *alone* presented a consistently revolutionary programme; it alone was in accord with internationalism; it alone advocated concentration along *non-imperialist* lines.

The imperialism of our days has led to a situation in which the Great-Power oppression of nations has become general. The view that a struggle must be conducted against the social-chauvinism of the dominant nations, who are now engaged in an imperialist war to enhance the oppression of nations, and are oppressing most of the world's nations and most of the earth's population—this view must be decisive, cardinal and basic in the national programme of Social-Democracy.

Take a glance at the present trends in Social-Democratic thinking on this subject. The petty-bourgeois Utopians, who dreamt of equality and peace among nations under capitalism, have been succeeded by the social-imperialists. In combating the former, Parabellum is tilting at wind-mills, thereby unwittingly playing in the hands of the social-imperialists. What is the social-chauvinists' programme on the national question?

They either entirely deny the right to self-determination, using arguments like those advanced by Parabellum (Cunow, Parvus, the Russian opportunists Semkovsky, Lieberman, and others), or they recognise that right in a patently hypocritical fashion, namely, without applying it to those very nations that are oppressed by their own nation or by her military allies (Plekhanov, Hyndman, all the pro-French patriots, then Scheidemann, etc., etc.). The most plausible formulation of the social-chauvinist lie, one that is therefore most dangerous to the proletariat, is provided by Kautsky. In word, he is *in favour* of the self-determination of nations; in word, he is for the Social-Democratic Party "*die Selbständigkeit der Nationen allseitig (!) und rückhaltlos (?) achtet und fordert*"\* (*Die Neue Zeit* No. 33, II, S. 241, May 21, 1915). In deed, however, he has adapted the national programme to the prevailing social-chauvinism, distorted and docked it; he gives no precise definition of the duties of the socialists in the oppressor nations, and patently falsifies the democratic principle itself when he says that to demand "state independence" (*staatliche Selbständigkeit*) for every nation would mean demanding "too much" ("*zu viel*", *Die Neue Zeit* No. 33, II, S. 77, April 16, 1915). "National autonomy", if you please, is enough! The principal question, the one the imperialist bourgeoisie will not permit discussion of, namely, the question of the *boundaries of a state*, that is built upon the oppression of nations, is evaded by Kautsky, who, to please that bourgeoisie, has thrown out of the programme what is most essential. The bourgeoisie are ready to promise all the "national equality" and "national autonomy" you please, so long as the proletariat remain within the

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\* "comprehensively (!) and unreservedly (?) respecting and demanding the independence of nations".—*Ed.*

framework of legality and “peacefully” submit to them on the question of the state *boundaries*! Kautsky has formulated the national programme of Social-Democracy in a reformist, not a revolutionary manner.

Parabellum’s national programme, or, to be more precise, his *assurances* that “we are against annexations”, has the wholehearted backing of the “*Parteivorstand*,”\* Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co., for the very reason that the programme does not expose the dominant social-patriots. Bourgeois pacifists would also endorse that programme. Parabellum’s splendid *general* programme (“a revolutionary mass struggle against capitalism”) serves him—as it did the Proud-honists of the sixties—not for the drawing up, in conformity with it and in its spirit, of a programme on the national question that is uncompromising and equally revolutionary, but in order to leave the way open to the social-patriots. In our imperialist times most socialists throughout the world are members of nations that oppress other nations and strive to extend that oppression. That is why our “struggle against annexations” will be meaningless and will not scare the social-patriots in the least, unless we declare that a socialist of an oppressor nation who does not conduct both peacetime and wartime propaganda in favour of freedom of secession for oppressed nations, is no socialist and no internationalist, but a chauvinist! The socialist of an oppressor nation who fails to conduct such propaganda in defiance of government bans, i.e., in the free, i.e., in the illegal press, is a hypocritical advocate of equal rights for nations!

Written in German  
not earlier than  
October 16 (29), 1915

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 21, pp. 407-12

First published in 1927  
in *Lenin Miscellany VI*

Signed: *N. Lenin*

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\* The Executive of the German Social-Democratic Party.—*Ed.*



## From THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

### 6. THREE TYPES OF COUNTRIES WITH RESPECT TO THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS

In this respect, countries must be divided into three main types.

First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States. In these countries progressive bourgeois national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these "great" nations oppresses other nations both in the colonies and at home. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland.\*

Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of

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\* In some small states which have kept out of the war of 1914-16—Holland and Switzerland, for example the bourgeoisie makes extensive use of the "self-determination of nations" slogan to justify participation in the imperialist war. This is a motive inducing the Social-Democrats in such countries to repudiate self-determination. Wrong arguments are being used to defend a correct proletarian policy, the repudiation of "defence of the fatherland" in an *imperialist* war. This results in a distortion of Marxism in theory, and in practice leads to a peculiar small-nation narrow-mindedness, neglect of the *hundreds of millions* of people in nations that are enslaved by the "dominant" nations. Comrade Gorter, in his excellent pamphlet *Imperialism, War and Social-Democracy*, wrongly rejects the principle of self-determination of nations, but correctly *applies* it, when he demands the *immediate* granting of "political and *national* independence" to the Dutch Indies and exposes the Dutch opportunists who refuse to put forward this demand and to fight for it.

the proletariat in these countries, both in completing their bourgeois-democratic reforms and rendering assistance to the socialist revolution in other countries, cannot be carried out without championing the right of nations to self-determination. The most difficult and most important task in this is to unite the class struggle of the workers of the oppressor nations with that of the workers of the oppressed nations.

Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, such as China, Persia and Turkey, and all the colonies, which have a combined population of 1,000 million. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements either have hardly begun, or have still a long way to go. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation—and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing else than the recognition of the right to self-determination; they must also render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising—or revolutionary war, in the event of one—*against* the imperialist powers that oppressed them.

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No. 1

*Collected Works,*  
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**From INITIAL VARIANT  
OF R.S.D.L.P. C.C. PROPOSALS  
TO THE SECOND SOCIALIST CONFERENCE<sup>57</sup>**

10. The central point of the prevailing hypocrisy about a "peace programme" is the allegedly unanimous acceptance of struggle against *old* and *new annexations*. But those who talk about annexations and the struggle against them are unable, or for the most part unwilling, to think about *the meaning of annexation*. It is clear that not every attachment of "foreign" territory can be called annexation, since socialists, generally speaking, are in favour of eliminating frontiers between nations, the coming together and integration of nations, and the formation of larger states. It is clear that not every infringement of the *status quo* can be considered annexation: this would be a most reactionary attitude, and a mockery of the fundamental conceptions of historical science. It is clear that not every attachment by force, that is, war, can be considered annexation, since socialists cannot object to force if it is applied in the interests of the mass of the population and the interests of mankind's progress. It is clear that only the attachment of territory *against the will* of its population can and must be deemed annexation. In other words, the concept of annexation is organically bound up with the concept of *self-determination of nations*.

11. It is precisely on the basis of the *present* war, because of the fact that it is imperialist on the part of *both* groups of warring "Great" Powers, that there was bound to develop, and actually did develop, the phenomenon of the bourgeoisie and social-chauvinists intensively "*fighting*" against "annexations", *if* they have been carried out, or are being carried out, by an *enemy* state. Südekum and his Austro-German friends and defenders, including Haase and

Kautsky, are silent about the annexations carried out by Germany in respect of Alsace-Lorraine, Denmark, Poland, etc., but very often "fight against annexations" carried out by Russia in respect of Finland, Poland, Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc., by Britain in respect of India, and so forth. On the other side, the British, French, Italian and Russian Südekums, i.e., Hyndman, Guesde, Vandervelde, Renaudel, Trèves, Plekhanov, Axelrod, Chkheidze and Co., are silent about Britain's annexations in respect of India, France's in respect of Nice or Morocco, Italy's in respect of Tripoli or Albania, Russia's in respect of Poland, Ukraine, etc., but then largely "fight against annexations" carried out by Germany.

It is clear that such "struggle against annexations" on the part of the social-chauvinists and Kautskyites is hypocritical through and through, and the bourgeoisie is assisting such struggle directly, by allocating millions upon millions for chauvinist propaganda, and indirectly, by granting a monopoly of legality only to the social-chauvinists and the Kautskyites.

It is clear that both the French "socialists" who justify a war for Alsace-Lorraine, and the German "socialists" who refuse to demand freedom for Alsace-Lorraine to secede from Germany, are equally annexationists, for all their swearing to the contrary. It is clear that Russian "socialists" who speak or write against the "break-up of Russia", or, behind the "peace without annexations" slogan, justify, directly or indirectly, the present war over who is to enslave Poland, are just as much annexationists, and so on and so forth.

12. If socialists are not to transform "the struggle against annexations" into an empty phrase or into revolting hypocrisy, they should, *first*, explain to the masses the need for revolutionary struggle for the conquest of political power by the proletariat and a socialist revolution which springs from all the conditions of the imperialist epoch and the present imperialist war, and which alone can firmly and everywhere ensure the self-determination of nations, i.e., liberate oppressed nations and effect the coming together and integration of nations, not on the basis of force but on the basis of the equal rights and consent of the proletariat and working people of all nations:

*secondly*, immediately mount the widest propaganda and agitation against the veiled chauvinism and annexationism of the official socialist parties, especially in the "Great" Powers. Socialists should explain to the masses that the English socialist who does not struggle now for freedom of secession for Ireland, India, etc., is a socialist and internationalist only in words, and a chauvinist and annexationist in practice. The same applies to the French socialist who does not fight for the freedom of the French colonies, against the war to annex Alsace-Lorraine, etc.; the German socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession for Alsace-Lorraine, the Danes, the Poles, the Belgians, the Serbs and others; the Russian socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession for Ukraine, Finland, etc., and against war over Poland; the Italian socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession for Tripoli, Albania, etc.; the Dutch socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession and independence for the Dutch East Indies; the Polish socialist who does not fight for full freedom and equality for the Jews and the Ukrainians oppressed by the Poles, and so on.

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and March 1916

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November 6-7, 1927



## From GERMAN AND NON-GERMAN CHAUVINISM

The German chauvinists (who include Parvus, the publisher of a little magazine, called *Die Glocke*, among whose contributors are Lensch, Haenisch, Grünwald and all the rest of the crew of "socialist" lackeys of the German imperialist bourgeoisie) speak at great length and very eagerly, for example, about independence for the peoples oppressed by Britain. It is not only the social-chauvinists of Germany, i.e., socialists in words and chauvinists in deeds, but the whole bourgeois press of Germany that is trumpeting with all its might about the shameful, brutal and reactionary, etc., fashion in which Britain rules her colonies. The German newspapers write about the liberation movement in India with great gusto, malicious glee, delight and rapture.

It is easy to see why the German bourgeoisie is full of malicious joy: it hopes to improve its military position by fanning the discontent and the anti-British movement in India. These hopes are silly, of course, because it is simply impossible seriously to entertain the idea of influencing the life of a multi-million people, and a very peculiar people at that, from outside, from afar, in a foreign language, particularly when the influence is not systematic, but casual, only for the duration of the war. Rather than the desire to influence India the efforts of the German imperialist bourgeoisie are more of an attempt at self-consolation, more of a desire to fool the German people and to divert their attention from home to foreign parts.

But this general, theoretical question automatically arises: What is at the root of the falsehood of such arguments; how can the hypocrisy of the German imperialists be exposed with unerring certainty? The correct theoret-

ical answer pointing to the root of falsehood always serves as a means of exposing the hypocrites who, for reasons all too obvious, are inclined to cover up their falsehood, to obscure it, to clothe it in flowery phrases, all sorts of phrases, phrases about everything in the world, even about internationalism. Even the Lensches, Südekums and Scheidemanns, all these agents of the German bourgeoisie, who, unfortunately, belong to the so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany, insist that they are internationalists. Men must not be judged by their words, however, but by their deeds. This is a home truth. Will anyone in Russia judge Potresov, Levitsky, Bulkin and Co. by their words? Of course not.

The falsehood of the German chauvinists has its roots in their shouting their sympathy for the independence of the peoples oppressed by Britain, their enemy in the war, and modestly, sometimes much too modestly, keeping silent about the independence of the peoples oppressed by *their own* nation.

*Voprosy Strakhovaniya*  
No. 5 (54),  
May 31, 1916

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 22, pp. 182-84

## From IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

### VI. DIVISION OF THE WORLD AMONG THE GREAT POWERS

In his book, on "the territorial development of the European colonies", A. Supan,\* the geographer, gives the following brief summary of this development at the end of the nineteenth century:

*Percentage of Territory Belonging to the European  
Colonial Powers (Including the United States)*

	1876	1900	Increase or decrease
Africa . . . . .	10.8	90.4	+79.6
Polynesia . . . . .	56.8	98.9	+42.1
Asia . . . . .	51.5	56.6	+ 5.1
Australia . . . . .	100.0	100.0	—
America . . . . .	27.5	27.2	— 0.3

"The characteristic feature of this period," he concludes, "is, therefore, the division of Africa and Polynesia." As there are no unoccupied territories—that is, territories that do not belong to any state—in Asia and America, it is necessary to amplify Supan's conclusion and say that the characteristic feature of the period under review is the final partitioning of the globe—final, not in the sense that *repartition* is impossible; on the contrary, repartitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future *only* redivision is possible, i.e., territories can only pass from one "owner" to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an "owner".

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\* A. Supan, *Die territoriale Entwicklung der europäischen Kolonien*, 1906, S. 254.

Hence, we are living in a peculiar epoch of world colonial policy, which is most closely connected with the "latest stage in the development of capitalism", with finance capital. For this reason, it is essential first of all to deal in greater detail with the facts, in order to ascertain as exactly as possible what distinguishes this epoch from those preceding it, and what the present situation is. In the first place, two questions of fact arise here: is an intensification of colonial policy, a sharpening of the struggle for colonies, observed precisely in the epoch of finance capital? And how, in this respect, is the world divided at the present time?

The American writer, Morris, in his book on the history of colonisation,\* made an attempt to sum up the data on the colonial possessions of Great Britain, France and Germany during different periods of the nineteenth century. The following is a brief summary of the results he has obtained:

*Colonial Possessions*

Year	Great Britain		France		Germany	
	Area (000,000 sq. miles)	Pop. (000,000)	Area (000,000 sq. miles)	Pop. (000,000)	Area (000,000 sq. miles)	Pop. (000,000)
1815-1830	?	126.4	0.02	0.5	—	—
1860	2.5	145.1	0.2	3.4	—	—
1880	7.7	267.9	0.7	7.5	—	—
1899	9.3	309.0	3.7	56.4	1.0	14.7

For Great Britain, the period of the enormous expansion of colonial conquests was that between 1860 and 1880, and it was also very considerable in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. For France and Germany this period falls precisely in these twenty years. We saw above that the development of pre-monopoly capitalism, of capitalism in which free competition was predominant, reached its limit in the 1860s and 1870s. We now see that it is *precisely after that period* that the tremendous "boom" in colonial conquests begins, and that the struggle for the territorial division of the world becomes extraordinarily

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\* Henry C. Morris, *The History of Colonisation*, New York, 1900, Vol. II, p. 88; Vol. I, p. 419; Vol. II, p. 304.

sharp. It is beyond doubt, therefore, that capitalism's transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capital, *is connected* with the intensification of the struggle for the partitioning of the world.

Hobson, in his work on imperialism, marks the years 1884-1900 as the epoch of intensified "expansion" of the chief European states. According to his estimate, Great Britain during these years acquired 3,700,000 square miles of territory with 57,000,000 inhabitants; France, 3,600,000 square miles with 36,500,000; Germany, 1,000,000 square miles with 14,700,000; Belgium, 900,000 square miles with 30,000,000; Portugal, 800,000 square miles with 9,000,000 inhabitants. The scramble for colonies by all the capitalist states at the end of the nineteenth century and particularly since the 1880s is a commonly known fact in the history of diplomacy and of foreign policy.

In the most flourishing period of free competition in Great Britain, i.e., between 1840 and 1860, the leading British bourgeois politicians were *opposed* to colonial policy and were of the opinion that the liberation of the colonies, their complete separation from Britain, was inevitable and desirable. M. Beer, in an article, "Modern British Imperialism",\* published in 1898, shows that in 1852, Disraeli, a statesman who was generally inclined towards imperialism, declared: "The colonies are millstones round our necks." But at the end of the nineteenth century the British heroes of the hour were Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, who openly advocated imperialism and applied the imperialist policy in the most cynical manner!

It is not without interest to observe that even then these leading British bourgeois politicians saw the connection between what might be called the purely economic and the socio-political roots of modern imperialism. Chamberlain advocated imperialism as a "true, wise and economical policy", and pointed particularly to the German, American and Belgian competition which Great Britain was encountering in the world market. Salvation lies in monopoly, said the capitalists as they formed cartels, syndicates and trusts. Salvation lies in monopoly, echoed the political leaders of the bourgeoisie, hastening to appropriate the parts of

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\* *Die Neue Zeit*, XVI, I, 1898, S. 302.



the world not yet shared out. And Cecil Rhodes, we are informed by his intimate friend, the journalist Stead, expressed his imperialist views to him in 1895 in the following terms: "I was in the East End of London [a working-class quarter] yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread! bread!' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism.... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."\*

That was said in 1895 by Cecil Rhodes, millionaire, a king of finance, the man who was mainly responsible for the Anglo-Boer War. True, his defence of imperialism is crude and cynical, but in substance it does not differ from the "theory" advocated by Messrs. Maslov, Südekum, Potresov, David, the founder of Russian Marxism<sup>58</sup> and others. Cecil Rhodes was a somewhat more honest social-chauvinist....

To present as precise a picture as possible of the territorial division of the world and of the changes which have occurred during the last decades in this respect, I shall utilise the data furnished by Supan in the work already quoted on the colonial possessions of all the powers of the world. Supan takes the years 1876 and 1900; I shall take the year 1876—a year very aptly selected, for it is precisely by that time that the pre-monopolist stage of development of West-European capitalism can be said to have been, in the main, completed—and the year 1914, and instead of Supan's figures I shall quote the more recent statistics of Hübner's *Geographical and Statistical Tables*. Supan gives figures only for colonies; I think it useful, in order to present a complete picture of the division of the world, to add brief data on non-colonial and semi-colonial countries,

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\* Ibid., S. 304.

in which category I place Persia, China and Turkey: the first of these countries is already almost completely a colony, the second and third are becoming such.

We thus get the following result:

*Colonial Possessions of the Great Powers  
(000,000 square kilometres and 000,000 inhabitants)*

	Colonies				Metropolitan countries		Total	
	1876		1914		1914		1914	
	Area	Pop.	Area	Pop.	Area	Pop.	Area	Pop.
Great Britain . . . . .	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
Russia . . . . .	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
France . . . . .	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
Germany . . . . .	—	—	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
United States . . . . .	—	—	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
Japan . . . . .	—	—	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
<i>Total for 6 Great Powers . . . . .</i>	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6

Colonies of other powers (Belgium, Holland, etc.) . . . . .	9.9	45.3
Semi-colonial countries (Persia, China, Turkey) . . . . .	14.5	361.2
Other countries . . . . .	28.0	289.9

*Total for the world . . . . .* 133.9 1,657.0

We clearly see from these figures how "complete" was the partition of the world at the turn of the twentieth century. After 1876 colonial possessions increased to enormous dimensions, by more than fifty per cent. from 40,000,000 to 65,000,000 square kilometres for the six biggest powers; the increase amounts to 25,000,000 square kilometres, fifty per cent more than the area of the metropolitan countries (16,500,000 square kilometres). In 1876 three powers had no colonies, and a fourth, France, had scarcely any. By 1914 these four powers had acquired colonies with an area of 14,100,000 square kilometres, i.e., about half as much again as the area of Europe, with a population of nearly 100,000,000. The unevenness in the rate of expansion of colonial possessions is very great. If,

for instance, we compare France, Germany and Japan, which do not differ very much in area and population, we see that the first has acquired almost three times as much colonial territory as the other two combined. In regard to finance capital, France, at the beginning of the period we are considering, was also, perhaps, several times richer than Germany and Japan put together. In addition to, and on the basis of, purely economic conditions, geographical and other conditions also affect the dimensions of colonial possessions. However strong the process of levelling the world, of levelling the economic and living conditions in different countries, may have been in the past decades as a result of the pressure of large-scale industry, exchange and finance capital, considerable differences still remain; and among the six countries mentioned we see, firstly, young capitalist countries (America, Germany, Japan) whose progress has been extraordinarily rapid; secondly, countries with an old capitalist development (France and Great Britain), whose progress lately has been much slower than that of the previously mentioned countries, and thirdly, a country most backward economically (Russia), where modern capitalist imperialism is enmeshed, so to speak, in a particularly close network of pre-capitalist relations.

Alongside the colonial possessions of the Great Powers, we have placed the small colonies of the small states, which are, so to speak, the next objects of a possible and probable "redivision" of colonies. These small states mostly retain their colonies only because the big powers are torn by conflicting interests, friction, etc., which prevent them from coming to an agreement on the division of the spoils. As to the "semi-colonial" states, they provide an example of the transitional forms which are to be found in all spheres of nature and society. Finance capital is such a great, such a decisive, you might say, force in all economic and in all international relations, that it is capable of subjecting, and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence; we shall shortly see examples of this. Of course, finance capital finds most "convenient", and derives the greatest profit from, a *form* of subjection which involves the loss of the political independence of the subjected countries and peoples. In this

respect, the semi-colonial countries provide a typical example of the "middle stage". It is natural that the struggle for these semi-dependent countries should have become particularly bitter in the epoch of finance capital, when the rest of the world has already been divided up.

Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practised imperialism. But "general" disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, the fundamental difference between socio-economic formations, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: "Greater Rome and Greater Britain."\* Even the capitalist colonial policy of *previous* stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital.

The principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism is the domination of monopolist associations of big employers. These monopolies are most firmly established when *all* the sources of raw materials are captured by one group, and we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist associations exert every effort to deprive their rivals of all opportunity of competing, to buy up, for example, iron-fields, oilfields, etc. Colonial possession alone gives the monopolies complete guarantee against all contingencies in the struggle against competitors, including the case of the adversary wanting to be protected by a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies.

"It may be asserted," writes Schilder, "although it may sound paradoxical to some, that in the more or less foreseeable future the growth of the urban and industrial population is more likely to be hindered by a shortage of raw materials for industry than by a shortage of food." For example, there is a growing shortage of timber—the price of which is steadily rising—of leather, and of raw

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\* C. P. Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, Oxford, 1912, or the Earl of Cromer's *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, London, 1910.

materials for the textile industry. "Associations of manufacturers are making efforts to create an equilibrium between agriculture and industry in the whole of world economy; as an example of this we might mention the International Federation of Cotton Spinners' Associations in several of the most important industrial countries, founded in 1904, and the European Federation of Flax Spinners' Associations, founded on the same model in 1910."\*

Of course, the bourgeois reformists, and among them particularly the present-day adherents of Kautsky, try to belittle the importance of facts of this kind by arguing that raw materials "could be" obtained in the open market without a "costly and dangerous" colonial policy; and that the supply of raw materials "could be" increased enormously by "simply" improving conditions in agriculture in general. But such arguments become an apology for imperialism, an attempt to paint it in bright colours, because they ignore the principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism: monopolies. The free market is becoming more and more a thing of the past; monopolist syndicates and trusts are restricting it with every passing day, and "simply" improving conditions in agriculture means improving the conditions of the masses, raising wages and reducing profits. Where, except in the imagination of sentimental reformists, are there any trusts capable of concerning themselves with the condition of the masses instead of the conquest of colonies?

Finance capital is interested not only in the already discovered sources of raw materials but also in potential sources, because present-day technical development is extremely rapid, and land which is useless today may be improved tomorrow if new methods are devised (to this end a big bank can equip a special expedition of engineers, agricultural experts, etc.), and if large amounts of capital are invested. This also applies to prospecting for minerals, to new methods of processing up and utilising raw materials, etc., etc. Hence the inevitable striving of finance capital to enlarge its spheres of influence and even its

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\* Sigmund Schilder, *Entwicklungstendenzen der Weltwirtschaft*, Berlin, 1912, Band I, S. 38-42.



actual territory. In the same way that the trusts capitalise their property at two or three times its value, taking into account its "potential" (and not actual) profits and the further results of monopoly, so finance capital in general strives to seize the largest possible amount of land of all kinds in all places, and by every means, taking into account potential sources of raw materials and fearing to be left behind in the fierce struggle for the last remnants of independent territory, or for the repartition of those territories that have been already divided.

The British capitalists are exerting every effort to develop cotton growing in *their* colony, Egypt (in 1904, out of 2,300,000 hectares of land under cultivation, 600,000, or more than one-fourth were under cotton); the Russians are doing the same in *their* colony, Turkestan, because in this way they will be in a better position to defeat their foreign competitors, to monopolise the sources of raw materials and form a more economical and profitable textile trust in which *all* the processes of cotton production and manufacturing will be "combined" and concentrated in the hands of one set of owners.

The interests pursued in exporting capital also give an impetus to the conquest of colonies, for in the colonial market it is easier to employ monopoly methods (and sometimes they are the only methods that can be employed) to eliminate competition, to ensure supplies, to secure the necessary "connections", etc.

The non-economic superstructure which grows up on the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest. "Finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination," as Hilferding very truly says. And a French bourgeois writer, developing and supplementing, as it were, the ideas of Cecil Rhodes quoted above,\* writes that social causes should be added to the economic causes of modern colonial policy: "Owing to the growing complexities of life and the difficulties which weigh not only on the masses of the workers, but also on the middle classes, impatience, irritation and hatred are accumulating in all the countries of the old civilisation and are becoming a menace to public order; the energy which

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\* See p. 139 of this book.—*Ed.*

is being hurled out of the definite class channel must be given employment abroad in order to avert an explosion at home'.\*\*

Since we are speaking of colonial policy in the epoch of capitalist imperialism, it must be observed that finance capital and its foreign policy, which is the struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, give rise to a number of *transitional* forms of state dependence. Not only are the two main groups of countries, those owning colonies, and the colonies themselves, but also the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence, typical of this epoch. We have already referred to one form of dependence—the semi-colony. An example of another is provided by Argentina.

“South America, and especially Argentina,” writes Schulze-Gaevernitz in his work on British imperialism, “is so dependent financially on London that it ought to be described as almost a British commercial colony.”\*\* Basing himself on the reports of the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Buenos Aires for 1909, Schilder estimated the amount of British capital invested in Argentina at 8,750 million francs. It is not difficult to imagine what strong connections British finance capital (and its faithful “friend”, diplomacy) thereby acquires with the Argentine bourgeoisie, with the circles that control the whole of that country’s economic and political life.

A somewhat different form of financial and diplomatic dependence, accompanied by political independence, is presented by Portugal. Portugal is an independent sovereign state, but actually, for more than two hundred years, since the war of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), it has been a British protectorate. Great Britain has protected Portugal and her colonies in order to fortify her own positions in the fight against her rivals, Spain and France. In

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\* Wahl, *La France aux colonies* quoted by Henri Russier, *Le Partage de l’Océanie*, Paris, 1905, p. 165.

\*\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus und englischer Freihandel zu Beginn des 20-ten Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1906, S. 318. Sartorius v. Waltershausen says the same in *Das volkswirtschaftliche System der Kapitalanlage im Auslande*, Berlin, 1907, S. 46.

return Great Britain has received commercial privileges, preferential conditions for importing goods and especially capital into Portugal and the Portuguese colonies, the right to use the ports and islands of Portugal, her telegraph cables, etc., etc.\* Relations of this kind have always existed between big and little states, but in the epoch of capitalist imperialism they become a general system, they form part of the sum total of "divide the world" relations and become links in the chain of operations of world finance capital.

In order to finish with the question of the division of the world, I must make the following additional observation. This question was raised quite openly and definitely not only in American literature after the Spanish-American War,<sup>59</sup> and in English literature after the Anglo-Boer War, at the very end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth; not only has German literature, which has "most jealously" watched "British imperialism", systematically given its appraisal of this fact. This question has also been raised in French bourgeois literature as definitely and broadly as is thinkable from the bourgeois point of view. Let me quote Driault, the historian, who, in his book, *Political and Social Problems at the End of the Nineteenth Century*, in the chapter "The Great Powers and the Division of the World", wrote the following: "During the past few years, all the free territory of the globe, with the exception of China, has been occupied by the powers of Europe and North America. This has already brought about several conflicts and shifts of spheres of influence, and these foreshadow more terrible upheavals in the near future. For it is necessary to make haste. The nations which have not yet made provision for themselves run the risk of never receiving their share and never participating in the tremendous exploitation of the globe which will be one of the most essential features of the next century [i.e., the twentieth]. That is why all Europe and America have lately been afflicted with the fever of colonial expansion, of 'imperialism', that most noteworthy feature of the end of the nineteenth century." And the author added: "In this partition of the world, in this furious hunt for the treasures and the big markets of the globe, the relative strength of the

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\* Schilder, op. cit., Vol. I, S. 160-61.

empires founded in this nineteenth century is totally out of proportion to the place occupied in Europe by the nations which founded them. The dominant powers in Europe, the arbiters of her destiny, are *not* equally preponderant in the whole world. And, as colonial might, the hope of controlling as yet unassessed wealth, will evidently react upon the relative strength of the European powers, the colonial question—‘imperialism’, if you will—which has already modified the political conditions of Europe itself, will modify them more and more.”\*

## VII. IMPERIALISM, AS A SPECIAL STAGE OF CAPITALISM

We must now try to sum up, to draw together the threads of what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside

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\* J.-E. Driault, *Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, Paris, 1900, p. 299.

it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

- 1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; 2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this of "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; 3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and 5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.



We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if we bear in mind not only the basic, purely economic concepts—to which the above definition is limited—but also the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or the relation between imperialism and the two main trends in the working-class movement. The thing to be noted at this point is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the development of capitalism. To enable the reader to obtain the most well-grounded idea of imperialism, I deliberately tried to quote as extensively as possible *bourgeois* economists who have to admit the particularly incontrovertible facts concerning the latest stage of capitalist economy. With the same object in view, I have quoted detailed statistics which enable one to see to what degree bank capital, etc., has grown, in what precisely the transformation of quantity into quality, of developed capitalism into imperialism, was expressed. Needless to say, of course, all boundaries in nature and in society are conventional and changeable, and it would be absurd to argue, for example, about the particular year or decade in which imperialism “definitely” became established.

In the matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with Karl Kautsky, the principal Marxist theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a “phase” or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy “preferred” by finance capital; that imperialism must not be “identified” with “present-day capitalism”; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean “all the phenomena of present-day capitalism”—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers, and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the “flattest tautology”, because, in that case, “imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism”, and so on. The best way to present Kautsky’s idea is to quote his own definition of imperialism, which is

diametrically opposed to the substance of the ideas which I have set forth (for the objections coming from the camp of the German Marxists, who have been advocating similar ideas for many years already, have been long known to Kautsky as the objections of a definite trend in Marxism).

Kautsky's definition is as follows:

"Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large areas of *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it."<sup>\*</sup>

This definition is of no use at all because it one-sidedly, i.e., arbitrarily, singles out only the national question (although the latter is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism), it arbitrarily and *inaccurately* connects this question *only* with industrial capital in the countries which annex other nations, and in an equally arbitrary and inaccurate manner pushes into the forefront the annexation of agrarian regions.

Imperialism is a striving for annexations—this is what the *political* part of Kautsky's definition amounts to. It is correct, but very incomplete, for politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction. For the moment, however, we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into *his* definition. The inaccuracies in Kautsky's definition are glaring. The characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial *but* finance capital. It is not an accident that in France it was precisely the extraordinarily rapid development of *finance* capital, and the weakening of industrial capital, that from the eighties onwards, gave rise to the extreme intensification of annexationist (colonial) policy. The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a *redivision* to reach out for *every kind* of territory, and (2) an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry be-

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<sup>\*</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914, 2 (B. 32), S. 909, Sept. 11, 1914; cf. 1915, 2, S. 107 et seq.

tween several great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony. (Belgium is particularly important for Germany as a base for operations against Britain; Britain needs Baghdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.)

Kautsky refers especially—and repeatedly—to English writers who, he alleges, have given a purely political meaning to the word “imperialism” in the sense that he, Kautsky, understands it. We take up the work by the English writer Hobson, *Imperialism*, which appeared in 1902, and there we read:

“The new imperialism differs from the older, first, in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the theory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain; secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests.”\*

We see that Kautsky is absolutely wrong in referring to English writers generally (unless he meant the vulgar English imperialists, or the avowed apologists for imperialism). We see that Kautsky, while claiming that he continues to advocate Marxism, as a matter of fact takes a step backward compared with the *social-liberal* Hobson, who *more correctly* takes into account two “historically concrete” (Kautsky’s definition is a mockery of historical concreteness!) features of modern imperialism: 1) the competition between *several* imperialisms, and 2) the predominance of the financier over the merchant. If it is chiefly a question of the annexation of agrarian countries by industrial countries, then the role of the merchant is put in the forefront.

Kautsky’s definition is not only wrong and un-Marxist. It serves as a basis for a whole system of views which signify a rupture with Marxist theory and Marxist practice all along the line. I shall refer to this later. The argument about words which Kautsky raises as to whether the latest stage of capitalism should be called imperialism or the stage of finance capital is not worth serious attention. Call

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\* Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902, p. 324.

it what you will, it makes no difference. The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy "preferred" by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very same basis of finance capital. It follows, then, that monopolies in the economy are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexationist methods in politics. It follows, then, that the territorial division of the world, which was completed during this very epoch of finance capital, and which constitutes the basis of the present peculiar forms of rivalry between the biggest capitalist states, is compatible with a non-imperialist policy. The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.

Kautsky enters into controversy with the German apologist of imperialism and annexations, Cunow, who clumsily and cynically argues that imperialism is present-day capitalism; the development of capitalism is inevitable and progressive; therefore imperialism is progressive; therefore, we should grovel before it and glorify it! This is something like the caricature of the Russian Marxists which the Narodniks drew in 1894-95. They argued: if the Marxists believe that capitalism is inevitable in Russia, that it is progressive, then they ought to open a tavern and begin to implant capitalism! Kautsky's reply to Cunow is as follows: imperialism is not present-day capitalism; it is only one of the forms of the policy of present-day capitalism. This policy we can and should fight, fight imperialism, annexations, etc.

The reply seems quite plausible, but in effect it is a more subtle and more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) advocacy of conciliation with imperialism, because a "fight" against the policy of the trusts and banks that does not affect the economic basis of the trusts and banks is mere bourgeois reformism and pacifism, the benevolent and innocent expression of pious wishes. Evasion of existing contradictions, forgetting the most important of them, instead of revealing their full depth—such is Kautsky's theory, which has nothing in common with Marxism.



Naturally, such a "theory" can only serve the purpose of advocating unity with the Cunows!

"From the purely economic point of view," writes Kautsky, "it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism,"\* i.e., of a super-imperialism, of a union of the imperialisms of the whole world and not struggles among them, a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital".\*\*

We shall have to deal with this "theory of ultra-imperialism" later on in order to show in detail how decisively and completely it breaks with Marxism. At present, in keeping with the general plan of the present work, we must examine the exact economic data on this question. "From the purely economic point of view", is "ultra-imperialism" possible, or is it ultra-nonsense?

If the purely economic point of view is meant to be a "pure" abstraction, then all that can be said reduces itself to the following proposition: development is proceeding towards monopolies, hence, towards a single world monopoly, towards a single world trust. This is indisputable, but it is also as completely meaningless as is the statement that "development is proceeding" towards the manufacture of foodstuffs in laboratories. In this sense the "theory" of ultra-imperialism is no less absurd than a "theory of ultra-agriculture" would be.

If, however, we are discussing the "purely economic" conditions of the epoch of finance capital as a historically concrete epoch which began at the turn of the twentieth century, then the best reply that one can make to the lifeless abstractions of "ultra-imperialism" (which serve exclusively a most reactionary aim: that of diverting attention from the depth of *existing* antagonisms) is to contrast them with the concrete economic realities of the present-day world economy. Kautsky's utterly meaningless talk about ultra-imperialism encourages, among other things,

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\* *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914, 2 (B. 32), S. 921, Sept. 11, 1914. Cf. 1915, 2, S. 107 et seq.

\*\* *Ibid.*, 1915, 1, S. 144, April 30, 1915.



that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, i.e., that the rule of finance capital *lessens* the unevenness and contradictions inherent in the world economy, whereas in reality it *increases* them.

R. Calwer, in his little book, *An Introduction to the World Economy*,\* made an attempt to summarise the main, purely economic, data that enable one to obtain a concrete picture of the internal relations of the world economy at the turn of the twentieth century. He divides the world into five "main economic areas", as follows: 1) Central Europe (the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia and Great Britain); 2) Great Britain; 3) Russia; 4) Eastern Asia; 5) America; he includes the colonies in the "areas" of the states to which they belong and "leaves aside" a few countries not distributed according to areas, such as Persia, Afghanistan, and Arabia in Asia, Morocco and Abyssinia in Africa, etc.

Here is a brief summary of the economic data he quotes on these regions:

Principal economic areas	Transport Trade					Industry		
	Area (000,000 sq. km.)	Population (000,000)	Railways (000 km.)	Mercantile fleet (000,000 tons)	Imports and exports (000,000,000 marks)	Output		Number of cotton spindles (000,000)
						Coal (000,000 tons)	Iron	
1) Central Europe	27.6 (23.6)**	388 (146)	204	8	41	251	15	26
2) Britain . . . .	28.9 (28.6)**	398 (355)	140	11	25	249	9	51
3) Russia . . . . .	22	131	63	1	3	16	3	7
4) Eastern Asia . .	12	389	8	1	2	8	0.02	2
5) America . . . .	30	148	379	6	14	245	14	19

\* R. Calwer, *Einführung in die Weltwirtschaft*, Berlin, 1906.

\*\* The figures in parentheses show the area and population of the colonies.

We see three areas of highly developed capitalism (high development of means of transport, of trade and of industry): the Central European, the British and the American areas. Among these are three states which dominate the world: Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries have become extremely keen because Germany has only an insignificant area and few colonies; the creation of "Central Europe" is still a matter for the future, it is being born in the midst of a desperate struggle. For the moment the distinctive feature of the whole of Europe is political disunity. In the British and American areas, on the other hand, political concentration is very highly developed, but there is a vast disparity between the immense colonies of the one and the insignificant colonies of the other. In the colonies, however, capitalism is only beginning to develop. The struggle for South America is becoming more and more acute.

There are two areas where capitalism is little developed: Russia and Eastern Asia. In the former, the population is extremely sparse, in the latter it is extremely dense; in the former political concentration is high, in the latter it does not exist. The partitioning of China is only just beginning, and the struggle for it between Japan, the U.S., etc., is continually gaining in intensity.

Compare this reality—the vast diversity of economic and political conditions, the extreme disparity in the rate of development of the various countries, etc., and the violent struggles among the imperialist states—with Kautsky's silly little fable about "peaceful" ultra-imperialism. Is this not the reactionary attempt of a frightened philistine to hide from stern reality? Are not the international cartels which Kautsky imagines are the embryos of "ultra-imperialism" (in the same way as one "can" describe the manufacture of tablets in a laboratory as ultra-agriculture in embryo) an example of the division *and the redivision* of the world, the transition from peaceful division to non-peaceful division and vice versa? Is not American and other finance capital, which divided the whole world peacefully with Germany's participation in, for example, the international rail syndicate, or in the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on

the basis of a new relation of forces that is being changed by methods *anything but peaceful*?

Finance capital and the trusts do not diminish but increase the differences in the rate of growth of the various parts of the world economy. Once the relation of forces is changed, what other solution of the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force*? Railway statistics\* provide remarkably exact data on the different rates of growth of capitalism and finance capital in world economy. In the last decades of imperialist development, the total length of railways has changed as follows:

RAILWAYS (000 kilometres)			
	1890	1913	+
Europe . . . . .	224	346	+122
U.S. . . . .	268	411	+143
All colonies . . . . .	82	210	+128
Independent and semi-independent states of Asia and America . . . . .	43	137	+ 94
	<div> <div>125</div> <div>347</div> </div>		+222
<i>Total</i> . . . . .	617	1,104	

Thus, the development of railways has been most rapid in the colonies and in the independent (and semi-independent) states of Asia and America. Here, as we know, the finance capital of the four or five biggest capitalist states holds undisputed sway. Two hundred thousand kilometres of new railways in the colonies and in the other countries of Asia and America represent a capital of more than 40,000 million marks newly invested on particularly advantageous terms, with special guarantees of a good return and with profitable orders for steel works, etc., etc.

Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, *new*

\* *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich, 1915; Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen, 1892.* Minor details for the distribution of railways among the colonies of the various countries in 1890 had to be estimated approximately.

imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan). The struggle among the world imperialisms is becoming more acute. The tribute levied by finance capital on the most profitable colonial and overseas enterprises is increasing. In the division of this "booty", an exceptionally large part goes to countries which do not always stand at the top of the list in the rapidity of the development of their productive forces. In the case of the biggest countries, together with their colonies, the total length of railways was as follows:

	(000 kilometres)		
	1890	1913	
U.S. . . . .	268	413	+145
British Empire . . . . .	107	208	+101
Russia . . . . .	32	78	+ 46
Germany . . . . .	43	68	+ 25
France . . . . .	41	63	+ 22
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<i>Total for 5 powers . . .</i>	491	830	+339

Thus, about 80 per cent of the total existing railways are concentrated in the hands of the five biggest powers. But the concentration of the *ownership* of these railways, the concentration of finance capital, is immeasurably greater since the French and British millionaires, for example, own an enormous amount of shares and bonds in American, Russian and other railways.

Thanks to her colonies, Great Britain has increased the length of "her" railways by 100,000 kilometres, four times as much as Germany. And yet, it is well known that the development of productive forces in Germany, and especially the development of the coal and iron industries, has been incomparably more rapid during this period than in Britain—not to speak of France and Russia. In 1892, Germany produced 4,900,000 tons of pig-iron and Great Britain produced 6,800,000 tons; in 1912, Germany produced 17,600,000 tons and Great Britain, 9,000,000 tons. Germany, therefore, had an overwhelming superiority over Britain in this respect.\* The question is: what means other than war

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\* Cf. also Edgar Crammond, "The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires" in *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, July 1914, p. 777 et seq.

could there be *under capitalism* to overcome the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other?

### VIII. PARASITISM AND DECAY OF CAPITALISM

We now have to examine yet another significant aspect of imperialism to which most of the discussions on the subject usually attach insufficient importance. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that on this point he has taken a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. I refer to parasitism, which is characteristic of imperialism.

As we have seen, the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency to stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical and, consequently, of all other progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the *economic* possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. For instance, in America, a certain Owens invented a machine which revolutionised the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle-manufacturing cartel purchased Owens's patent, but pigeon-holed it, refrained from utilising it. Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this, by the by, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd). Certainly, the possibility of reducing the cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. But the *tendency* to stagnation and decay, which is characteristic of monopoly, continues to operate, and in some branches of industry, in some countries, for certain periods of time, it gains the upper hand.



The monopoly ownership of very extensive, rich or well-situated colonies, operates in the same direction.

Further, imperialism is an immense accumulation of money capital in a few countries, amounting, as we have seen, to 100,000-150,000 million francs in securities. Hence the extraordinary growth of a class, or rather, of a stratum of rentiers, i.e., people who live by "clipping coupons", who take no part in any enterprise whatever, whose profession is idleness. The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the rentiers from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by exploiting the labour of several overseas countries and colonies.

"In 1893," writes Hobson, "the British capital invested abroad represented about 15 per cent of the total wealth of the United Kingdom."\* Let me remind the reader that by 1915 this capital had increased about two and a half times. "Aggressive imperialism," says Hobson further on, "which costs the tax-payer so dear, which is of so little value to the manufacturer and trader ... is a source of great gain to the investor.... The annual income Great Britain derives from commissions in her whole foreign and colonial trade, import and export, is estimated by Sir R. Giffen at £18,000,000 [nearly 170 million rubles] for 1899, taken at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, upon a turnover of £800,000,000." Great as this sum is, it cannot explain the aggressive imperialism of Great Britain, which is explained by the income of £90 million to £100 million from "invested" capital, the income of the rentiers.

The income of the rentiers is *five times greater* than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the biggest "trading" country in the world! This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism.

For that reason the term "rentier state" (Rentnerstaat), or usurer state, is coming into common use in the economic literature that deals with imperialism. The world has become divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states. "At the top of the list of foreign investments," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "are those placed in politically dependent or allied countries: Great Britain

\* Hobson, op. cit., pp. 59, 62.

grants loans to Egypt, Japan, China and South America. Her navy plays here the part of bailiff in case of necessity. Great Britain's political power protects her from the indignation of her debtors.”\* Sartorius von Waltershausen in his book, *The National Economic System of Capital Investments Abroad*, cites Holland as the model “rentier state” and points out that Great Britain and France are now becoming such.\*\* Schilder is of the opinion that five industrial states have become “definitely pronounced creditor countries”: Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. He does not include Holland in this list simply because she is “industrially little developed”\*\*\*. The United States is a creditor only of the American countries.

“Great Britain,” says Schulze-Gaevernitz, “is gradually becoming transformed from an industrial into a creditor state. Notwithstanding the absolute increase in industrial output and the export of manufactured goods, there is an increase in the relative importance of income from interest and dividends, issues of securities, commissions and speculation in the whole of the national economy. In my opinion it is precisely this that forms the economic basis of imperialist ascendancy. The creditor is more firmly attached to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer.”\*\*\*\* In regard to Germany, A. Lansburgh, the publisher of the Berlin *Die Bank*, in 1911, in an article entitled “Germany—a Rentier State”, wrote the following: “People in Germany are ready to sneer at the yearning to become rentiers that is observed in France. But they forget that as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned the situation in Germany is becoming more and more like that in France.”\*\*\*\*\*

The rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the socio-political conditions of the countries concerned, in general, and the two fundamental trends in the working-class movement, in particular. To demonstrate this in the

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\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, S. 320 et seq.

\*\* Sartorius von Waltershausen, *Das volkswirtschaftliche System*, etc., Berlin, 1907, Buch IV.

\*\*\* Schilder, op. cit., S. 393.

\*\*\*\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, op. cit., S. 122.

\*\*\*\*\* *Die Bank*, 1911, 1, S. 10-11.

clearest possible manner let me quote Hobson, who is a most reliable witness, since he cannot be suspected of leaning towards Marxist orthodoxy; on the other hand, he is an Englishman who is very well acquainted with the situation in the country which is richest in colonies, in finance capital, and in imperialist experience.

With the Anglo-Boer War fresh in his mind, Hobson describes the connection between imperialism and the interests of the "financiers", their growing profits from contracts, supplies, etc., and writes: "While the directors of this definitely parasitic policy are capitalists, the same motives appeal to special classes of the workers. In many towns most important trades are dependent upon government employment or contracts; the imperialism of the metal and shipbuilding centres is attributable in no small degree to this fact." Two sets of circumstances, in this writer's opinion, have weakened the old empires: 1) "economic parasitism", and 2) the formation of armies recruited from subject peoples. "There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence." And I shall add that the economic possibility of such bribery, whatever its form may be, requires high monopolist profits.

As for the second circumstance, Hobson writes: "One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives."

Hobson gives the following economic appraisal of the prospect of the partitioning of China: "The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters

of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a larger body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods; all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa.... We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation of great powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [it would be better to say: prospect] as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable; but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation.”\*

The author is quite right: *if* the forces of imperialism had not been counteracted they would have led precisely to what he has described. The significance of a “United States of Europe” in the present imperialist situation is correctly appraised. He should have added, however, that, also *within* the working-class movement, the opportunists, who

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\* Hobson, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 205, 144, 335, 386.

are for the moment victorious in most countries, are "working" systematically and undeviatingly in this very direction. Imperialism, which means the partitioning of the world and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, makes it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism. We must not, however, lose sight of the forces which counteract imperialism in general, and opportunism in particular, and which, naturally, the social-liberal Hobson is unable to perceive.

The German opportunist, Gerhard Hildebrand, who was once expelled from the Party for defending imperialism, and who could today be a leader of the so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany, supplements Hobson well by his advocacy of a "United States of Western Europe" (without Russia) for the purpose of "joint" action ... against the African Negroes, against the "great Islamic movement", for the maintenance of a "powerful army and navy", against a "Sino-Japanese coalition",\* etc.

The description of "British imperialism" in Schulze-Gaevernitz's book reveals the same parasitical traits. The national income of Great Britain approximately doubled from 1865 to 1898, while the income "from abroad" increased *ninefold* in the same period. While the "merit" of imperialism is that it "trains the Negro to habits of industry" (you cannot manage without coercion...), the "danger" of imperialism lies in that "Europe will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then the rougher work in industry—on to the coloured races, and itself be content with the role of rentier, and in this way, perhaps, pave the way for the economic, and later, the political emancipation of the coloured races".

An increasing proportion of land in England is being taken out of cultivation and used for sport, for the diversion of the rich. As far as Scotland—the most aristocratic place for hunting and other sports—is concerned, it is said that "it lives on its past and on Mr. Carnegie" (the Amer-

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\* Gerhard Hildebrand, *Die Erschütterung der Industriebherrschaft und des Industriesozialismus*, 1910, S. 229 et seq.



ican multimillionaire). On horse racing and fox hunting alone England annually spends £14,000,000 (nearly 130 million rubles). The number of rentiers in England is about one million. The percentage of the productively employed population to the total population is declining:

	Population England and Wales (000,000)	Workers in basic industries (000,000)	Per cent of total population
1851 . . . . .	17.9	4.1	23
1901 . . . . .	32.5	4.9	15

And in speaking of the British working class the bourgeois student of "British imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century" is obliged to distinguish systematically between the "*upper stratum*" of the workers and the "*lower stratum of the proletariat proper*". The upper stratum furnishes the bulk of the membership of co-operatives, of trade unions, of sporting clubs and of numerous religious sects. To this level is adapted the electoral system, which in Great Britain is still "*sufficiently restricted to exclude the lower stratum of the proletariat proper*"! In order to present the condition of the British working class in a rosy light, only this upper stratum—which constitutes a *minority* of the proletariat—is usually spoken of. For instance, "the problem of unemployment is mainly a London problem and that of the lower proletarian stratum, *to which the politicians attach little importance...*"\* He should have said: to which the bourgeois politicians and the "socialist" opportunists attach little importance.

One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid. As Hobson observes, emigration from Great Britain has been declining since 1884. In that year the number of emigrants was 242,000, while in 1900, the number was 169,000. Emigration from Germany reached the highest point between 1881 and 1890, with a total of 1,453,000 emigrants. In the course of the following two

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\* Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, S. 301.

decades, it fell to 544,000 and to 341,000. On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of workers entering Germany from Austria, Italy, Russia and other countries. According to the 1907 census, there were 1,342,294 foreigners in Germany, of whom 440,800 were industrial workers and 257,329 agricultural workers.\* In France, the workers employed in the mining industry are, "in great part", foreigners: Poles, Italians and Spaniards.\*\* In the United States, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe are engaged in the most poorly paid jobs, while American workers provide the highest percentage of overseers or of the better-paid workers.\*\*\* Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat.

It must be observed that in Great Britain the tendency of imperialism to split the workers, to strengthen opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working-class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important distinguishing features of imperialism were already observed in Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century—vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market. Marx and Engels traced this connection between opportunism in the working-class movement and the imperialist features of British capitalism systematically, during the course of several decades. For example, on October 7, 1858, Engels wrote to Marx: "The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable." Almost a quarter of a century later, in a letter dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks of the "worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the middle class". In a

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\* *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Bd. 211.

\*\* Henger, *Die Kapitalsanlage der Franzosen*, Stuttgart, 1913.

\*\*\* Hourwich, *Immigration and Labour*, New York, 1913.

letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."\* (Engels expressed similar ideas in the press in his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which appeared in 1892.)

This clearly shows the causes and effects. The causes are: 1) exploitation of the whole world by this country; 2) its monopolist position in the world market; 3) its colonial monopoly. The effects are: 1) a section of the British proletariat becomes bourgeois; 2) a section of the proletariat allows itself to be led by men bought by, or at least paid by, the bourgeoisie. The imperialism of the beginning of the twentieth century completed the division of the world among a handful of states, each of which today exploits (in the sense of drawing superprofits from) a part of the "whole world" only a little smaller than that which England exploited in 1858; each of them occupies a monopolist position in the world market thanks to trusts, cartels, finance capital and creditor and debtor relations; each of them enjoys to some degree a colonial monopoly (we have seen that out of the total of 75,000,000 sq. km., which comprise the *whole* colonial world, 65,000,000 sq. km., or 86 per cent, belong to six powers; 61,000,000 sq. km., or 81 per cent, belong to three powers).

The distinctive feature of the present situation is the prevalence of such economic and political conditions that are bound to increase the irreconcilability between opportunism and the general and vital interests of the working-class movement: imperialism has grown from an embryo into the predominant system; capitalist monopolies occupy first place in economics and politics; the division of the world has been completed; on the other hand, instead of the undivided monopoly of Great Britain, we see a few

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\* Briefwechsel von Marx und Engels, Bd. II, S. 290; IV, 433.—Karl Kautsky, *Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik*, Berlin, 1907, S. 79; this pamphlet was written by Kautsky in those infinitely distant days when he was still a Marxist.

imperialist powers contending for the right to share in this monopoly, and this struggle is characteristic of the whole period of the early twentieth century. Opportunism cannot now be completely triumphant in the working-class movement of one country for decades as it was in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century; but in a number of countries it has grown ripe, overripe, and rotten, and has become completely merged with bourgeois policy in the form of "social-chauvinism".\*

## IX. CRITIQUE OF IMPERIALISM

By the critique of imperialism, in the broad sense of the term, we mean the attitude of the different classes of society towards imperialist policy in connection with their general ideology.

The enormous dimensions of finance capital concentrated in a few hands and creating an extraordinarily dense and widespread network of relationships and connections which subordinates not only the small and medium, but also the very small capitalists and small masters, on the one hand, and the increasingly intense struggle waged against other national state groups of financiers for the division of the world and domination over other countries, on the other hand, cause the propertied classes to go over entirely to the side of imperialism. "General" enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism, furious defence of it and painting it in the brightest colours—such are the signs of the times. Imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. No Chinese Wall separates it from the other classes. The leaders of the present-day, so-called, "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany are justly called "social-imperialists", that is, socialists in words and imperialists in deeds; but as early as 1902, Hobson noted the existence in Britain of "Fabian imperialists" who belonged to the opportunist Fabian Society.

Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defence of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form; they obscure its complete domination and its deep-going roots,

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\* Russian social-chauvinism in its overt form, represented by the Potresovs, Chkhenkelis, Maslovs, etc., and in its covert form (Chkheidze, Skobelev, Axelrod, Martov, etc.), also emerged from the Russian variety of opportunism, namely, liquidationism.

strive to push specific and secondary details into the forefront and do their very best to distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes for "reform", such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc. Cynical and frank imperialists who are bold enough to admit the absurdity of the idea of reforming the fundamental characteristics of imperialism are a rare phenomenon.

Here is an example. The German imperialists attempt, in the magazine *Archives of World Economy*, to follow the national emancipation movements in the colonies, particularly, of course, in colonies other than those belonging to Germany. They note the unrest and the protest movements in India, the movement in Natal (South Africa), in the Dutch East Indies, etc. One of them, commenting on an English report of a conference held on June 28-30, 1910, of representatives of various subject nations and races, of peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe who are under foreign rule, writes as follows in appraising the speeches delivered at this conference: "We are told that we must fight imperialism; that the ruling states should recognise the right of subject peoples to independence; that an international tribunal should supervise the fulfilment of treaties concluded between the great powers and weak peoples. Further than the expression of these pious wishes they do not go. We see no trace of understanding of the fact that imperialism is inseparably bound up with capitalism in its present form and that, therefore [!!], an open struggle against imperialism would be hopeless, unless, perhaps, the fight were to be confined to protests against certain of its especially abhorrent excesses."\* Since the reform of the basis of imperialism is a deception, a "pious wish", since the bourgeois representatives of the oppressed nations go no "further" forward, the bourgeois representative of an oppressing nation goes "further" *backward*, to servility towards imperialism under cover of the claim to be "scientific". That is also "logic"!

The questions as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the further intensification and deepening of the antagonisms which it

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\* *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Bd. II, S. 193.



engenders, or backward, towards allaying these antagonisms, are fundamental questions in the critique of imperialism. Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but became merged with it in practice, and this is precisely where Kautsky and the broad international Kautskian trend deserted Marxism.

In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of the "anti-imperialists", the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy who declared this war to be "criminal", regarded the annexation of foreign territories as a violation of the Constitution, declared that the treatment of Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipinos (the Americans promised him the independence of his country, but later landed troops and annexed it), was "Jingo treachery", and quoted the words of Lincoln: "When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs others, it is no longer self-government; it is despotism."<sup>\*</sup> But as long as all this criticism shrank from recognising the inseverable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development—it remained a "pious wish".

This is also the main attitude taken by Hobson in his critique of imperialism. Hobson anticipated Kautsky in protesting against the "inevitability of imperialism" argument, and in urging the necessity of "increasing the consuming capacity" of the people (under capitalism!). The petty-bourgeois point of view in the critique of imperialism, the omnipotence of the banks, the financial oligarchy, etc., is adopted by the authors I have often quoted, such as

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<sup>\*</sup> J. Patouillet, *L'impérialisme américain*, Dijon, 1904, p. 272.

Agahd, A. Lansburgh, L. Eschwege, and among the French writers by Victor Berard, author of a superficial book entitled *England and Imperialism* which appeared in 1900. All these authors, who make no claim to be Marxists, contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy, condemn the Baghdad railway scheme, which is leading to conflicts and war, utter "pious wishes" for peace, etc. This applies also to the compiler of international stock and share issue statistics, A. Neymarck, who, after calculating the thousands of millions of francs representing "international" securities, exclaimed in 1912: "Is it possible to believe that peace may be disturbed . . . that, in the face of these enormous figures, anyone would risk starting a war?"\*\*

Such simple-mindedness on the part of the bourgeois economists is not surprising; moreover, *it is in their interest* to pretend to be so naïve and to talk "seriously" about peace under imperialism. But what remains of Kautsky's Marxism, when, in 1914, 1915 and 1916, he takes up the same bourgeois-reformist point of view and affirms that "everybody is agreed" (imperialists, pseudo-socialists and social-pacifists) on the matter of peace? Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist "pious wish" to wave them aside, to evade them.

Here is a sample of Kautsky's economic criticism of imperialism. He takes the statistics of the British export and import trade with Egypt for 1872 and 1912: it seems that this export and import trade has grown more slowly than British foreign trade as a whole. From this Kautsky concludes that "we have no reason to suppose that without military occupation the growth of British trade with Egypt would have been less, simply as a result of the mere operation of economic factors". "The urge of capital to expand . . . can be best promoted, not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy."\*\*

This argument of Kautsky's, which is repeated in every key by his Russian armour-bearer (and Russian shielder of the social-chauvinists), Mr. Spectator, constitutes the basis

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\* *Bulletin de l'institut international de statistique*, T. XIX, livr. II, p. 225.

\*\* Kautsky, *Nationalstaat, imperialistischer Staat und Staatenbund*, Nürnberg, 1915, S. 72 und 70.

of Kautskian critique of imperialism, and that is why we must deal with it in greater detail. We will begin with a quotation from Hilferding, whose conclusions Kautsky on many occasions, and notably in April 1915, has declared to have been "unanimously adopted by all socialist theoreticians".

"It is not the business of the proletariat," writes Hilferding, "to contrast the more progressive capitalist policy with that of the now bygone era of free trade and of hostility towards the state. The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade, but socialism. The aim of proletarian policy cannot today be the ideal of restoring free competition—which has now become a reactionary ideal—but the complete elimination of competition by the abolition of capitalism."\*

Kautsky broke with Marxism by advocating in the epoch of finance capital a "reactionary ideal", "peaceful democracy", "the mere operation of economic factors", for *objectively* this ideal drags us back from monopoly to non-monopoly capitalism, and is a reformist swindle.

Trade with Egypt (or with any other colony or semi-colony) "would have grown more" *without* military occupation, without imperialism, and without finance capital. What does this mean? That capitalism would have developed more rapidly if free competition had not been restricted by monopolies in general, or by the "connections", yoke (i.e., also the monopoly) of finance capital, or by the monopolist possession of colonies by certain countries?

Kautsky's argument can have no other meaning; and *this* "meaning" is meaningless. Let us assume that free competition, without any sort of monopoly, *would* have developed capitalism and trade more rapidly. But the more rapidly trade and capitalism develop, the greater is the concentration of production and capital which *gives rise* to monopoly. And monopolies have *already* arisen—precisely *out of* free competition! Even if monopolies have now begun to retard progress, it is not an argument in favour of free competition, which has become impossible after it has given rise to monopoly.

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\* *Finance Capital*, p. 567.

Whichever way one turns Kautsky's argument, one will find nothing in it except reaction and bourgeois reformism.

Even if we correct this argument and say, as Spectator says, that the trade of the colonies with Britain is now developing more slowly than their trade with other countries, it does not save Kautsky; for it is *also* monopoly, *also* imperialism that is beating Great Britain, only it is the monopoly and imperialism of another country (America, Germany). It is known that the cartels have given rise to a new and peculiar form of protective tariffs, i.e., goods suitable for export are protected (Engels noted this in Vol. III of *Capital*). It is known, too, that the cartels and finance capital have a system peculiar to themselves, that of "exporting goods at cut-rate prices", or "dumping", as the English call it: within a given country the cartel sells its goods at high monopoly prices, but sells them abroad at a much lower price to undercut the competitor, to enlarge its own production to the utmost, etc. If Germany's trade with the British colonies is developing more rapidly than Great Britain's, it only proves that German imperialism is younger, stronger and better organised than British imperialism, is superior to it; but it by no means proves the "superiority" of free trade, for it is not a fight between free trade and protection and colonial dependence, but between two rival imperialisms, two monopolies, two groups of finance capital. The superiority of German imperialism over British imperialism is more potent than the wall of colonial frontiers or of protective tariffs: to use this as an "argument" *in favour* of free trade and "peaceful democracy" is banal, it means forgetting the essential features and characteristics of imperialism, substituting petty-bourgeois reformism for Marxism.

It is interesting to note that even the bourgeois economist, A. Lansburgh, whose criticism of imperialism is as petty-bourgeois as Kautsky's, nevertheless got closer to a more scientific study of trade statistics. He did not compare one single country, chosen at random, and one single colony with the other countries; he examined the export trade of an imperialist country: 1) with countries which are financially dependent upon it, and borrow money from it; and 2) with countries which are financially independent. He obtained the following results:

*Export Trade of Germany (000,000 marks)*

		1889	1908	Per cent increase
To countries financially dependent on Germany	Rumania . . .	48.2	70.8	47
	Portugal . . .	19.0	32.8	73
	Argentina . . .	60.7	147.0	143
	Brazil . . . .	48.7	84.5	73
	Chile . . . . .	28.3	52.4	85
	Turkey . . . . .	29.9	64.0	114
<i>Total . . . . .</i>		<i>234.8</i>	<i>451.5</i>	<i>92</i>
To countries financially independent of Germany	Great Britain	651.8	997.4	53
	France . . . .	210.2	437.9	108
	Belgium . . . .	137.2	322.8	135
	Switzerland . .	177.4	401.1	127
	Australia . . .	21.2	64.5	205
	Dutch East Indies . . . .	8.8	40.7	363
<i>Total . . . . .</i>		<i>1,206.6</i>	<i>2,264.4</i>	<i>87</i>

Lansburgh did not draw *conclusions* and therefore, strangely enough, failed to observe that *if* the figures prove anything at all, they prove that *he is wrong*, for the exports to countries financially dependent on Germany have grown *more rapidly*, if only slightly, than exports to the countries which are financially independent. (I emphasise the "if", for Lansburgh's figures are far from complete.)

Tracing the connection between exports and loans, Lansburgh writes:

"In 1890-91, a Rumanian loan was floated through the German banks, which had already in previous years made advances on this loan. It was used chiefly to purchase railway materials in Germany. In 1891, German exports to Rumania amounted to 55 million marks. The following year they dropped to 39.4 million marks and, with fluctuations, to 25.4 million in 1900. Only in very recent years have they regained the level of 1891, thanks to two new loans.

"German exports to Portugal rose, following the loans of 1888-89, to 21,100,000 (1890); then, in the two following years, they dropped to 16,200,000 and 7,400,000, and regained their former level only in 1903.



"The figures of German trade with Argentina are still more striking. Loans were floated in 1888 and 1890; German exports to Argentina reached 60,700,000 marks (1889). Two years later they amounted to only 18,600,000 marks, less than one-third of the previous figure. It was not until 1901 that they regained and surpassed the level of 1889, and then only as a result of new loans floated by the state and by municipalities, with advances to build power stations, and with other credit operations.

"Exports to Chile, as a consequence of the loan of 1889, rose to 45,200,000 marks (in 1892), and a year later dropped to 22,500,000 marks. A new Chilean loan floated by the German banks in 1906 was followed by a rise of exports to 84,700,000 marks in 1907, only to fall again to 52,400,000 marks in 1908."\*

From these facts Lansburgh draws the amusing petty-bourgeois moral of how unstable and irregular export trade is when it is bound up with loans, how bad it is to invest capital abroad instead of "naturally" and "harmoniously" developing home industry, how "costly" are the millions in bakhshish that Krupp has to pay in floating foreign loans, etc. But the facts tell us clearly: the increase in exports is connected with *just these* swindling tricks of finance capital, which is not concerned with bourgeois morality, but with skinning the ox twice—first, it pockets the profits from the loan; then it pockets other profits from the *same* loan which the borrower uses to make purchases from Krupp, or to purchase railway material from the Steel Syndicate, etc.

I repeat that I do not by any means consider Lansburgh's figures to be perfect; but I had to quote them because they are more scientific than Kautsky's and Spectator's and because Lansburgh showed the correct way to approach the question. In discussing the significance of finance capital in regard to exports, etc., one must be able to single out the connection of exports especially and solely with the tricks of the financiers, especially and solely with the sale of goods by cartels, etc. Simply to compare colonies with non-colonies, one imperialism with another imperialism, one semi colony or colony (Egypt) with all other

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\* *Die Bank*, 1909, 2, S. 819 et seq.

countries, is to evade and to obscure the very *essence* of the question.

Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism and serves only as a preamble to propaganda for peace and unity with the opportunists and the social-chauvinists, precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and fundamental contradictions of imperialism: the contradictions between monopoly and free competition which exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and "honest" trade in the free market, the contradiction between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelised industry, on the other, etc.

The notorious theory of "ultra-imperialism", invented by Kautsky, is just as reactionary. Compare his arguments on this subject in 1915, with Hobson's arguments in 1902.

Kautsky: "... Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals? Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable. Can it be achieved? Sufficient premises are still lacking to enable us to answer this question."\*

Hobson: "Christendom thus laid out in a few great federal empires, each with a retinue of uncivilised dependencies, seems to many the most legitimate development of present tendencies, and one which would offer the best hope of permanent peace on an assured basis of inter-Imperialism."

Kautsky called ultra-imperialism or super-imperialism what Hobson, thirteen years earlier, described as inter-imperialism. Except for coining a new and clever catchword, replacing one Latin prefix by another, the only progress Kautsky has made in the sphere of "scientific" thought is that he gave out as Marxism what Hobson, in effect, described as the cant of English parsons. After the Anglo-Boer War it was quite natural for this highly honourable caste to exert their main efforts to *console* the British middle class and the workers who had lost many of their

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\* *Die Neue Zeit*, April 30, 1915, S. 144.

relatives on the battlefields of South Africa and who were obliged to pay higher taxes in order to guarantee still higher profits for the British financiers. And what better consolation could there be than the theory that imperialism is not so bad; that it stands close to inter- (or ultra-) imperialism, which can ensure permanent peace? No matter what the good intentions of the English parsons, or of sentimental Kautsky, may have been, the only objective, i.e., real, social significance of Kautsky's "theory" is this: it is a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, by distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present times, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary "ultra-imperialism" of the future. Deception of the masses—that is all there is in Kautsky's "Marxist" theory.

Indeed, it is enough to compare well-known and indisputable facts to become convinced of the utter falsity of the prospects which Kautsky tries to conjure up before the German workers (and the workers of all lands). Let us consider India, Indo-China and China. It is known that these three colonial and semi-colonial countries, with a population of six to seven hundred million, are subjected to the exploitation of the finance capital of several imperialist powers: Great Britain, France, Japan, the U.S.A., etc. Let us assume that these imperialist countries form alliances against one another in order to protect or enlarge their possessions, their interests and their spheres of influence in these Asiatic states; these alliances will be "inter-imperialist", or "ultra-imperialist" alliances. Let us assume that *all* the imperialist countries conclude an alliance for the "peaceful" division of these parts of Asia; this alliance would be an alliance of "internationally united finance capital". There are actual examples of alliances of this kind in the history of the twentieth century—the attitude of the powers to China, for instance. We ask, is it "conceivable", assuming that the capitalist system remains intact—and this is precisely the assumption that Kautsky does make—that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggle in every possible form?

The question has only to be presented clearly for any

other than a negative answer to be impossible. This is because the only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the *strength* of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the *even* development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, if her capitalist strength is compared with that of the Britain of that time; Japan compared with Russia in the same way. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *unchanged*? It is out of the question.

Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German "Marxist", Kautsky, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics. But in order to pacify the workers and reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, over-wise Kautsky *separates* one link of a single chain from another, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay, ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliance of *all* the powers for the "pacification" of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another "peaceful" general alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, *etc., etc.* Instead of showing the living connection between periods of imperialist peace and periods of imperialist war, Kautsky presents the workers with a lifeless abstraction in order to reconcile them to their lifeless leaders.



An American writer, Hill, in his *A History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe* refers in his preface to the following periods in the recent history of diplomacy: 1) the era of revolution; 2) the constitutional movement; 3) the present era of "commercial imperialism".\* Another writer divides the history of Great Britain's "world policy" since 1870 into four periods: 1) the first Asiatic period (that of the struggle against Russia's advance in Central Asia towards India); 2) the African period (approximately 1885-1902): that of the struggle against France for the partition of Africa (the "Fashoda incident"<sup>60</sup> of 1898 which brought her within a hair's breadth of war with France); 3) the second Asiatic period (alliance with Japan against Russia); and 4) the "European" period, chiefly anti-German.\*\* "The political patrol clashes take place on the financial field," wrote the banker, Riesser, in 1905, in showing how French finance capital operating in Italy was preparing the way for a political alliance of these countries, and how a conflict was developing between Germany and Great Britain over Persia, between all the European capitalists over Chinese loans, etc. Behold, the living reality of peaceful "ultra-imperialist" alliances in their inseverable connection with ordinary imperialist conflicts!

Kautsky's obscuring of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably boils down to painting imperialism in bright colours, leaves its traces in this writer's criticism of the political features of imperialism. Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations, i.e., the violation of national independence (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination). Hilferding rightly notes the connection between imperialism and the intensification of national oppression. "In the newly opened-

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\* David Jayne Hill, *A History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 10.

\*\* Schilder, op. cit., S. 178.



up countries," he writes. "the capital imported into them intensifies antagonisms and excites against the intruders the constantly growing resistance of the peoples who are awakening to national consciousness; this resistance can easily develop into dangerous measures against foreign capital. The old social relations become completely revolutionised, the age-long agrarian isolation of 'nations without history' is destroyed and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool. Capitalism itself gradually provides the subjugated with the means and resources for their emancipation and they set out to achieve the goal which once seemed highest to the European nations: the creation of a united national state as a means to economic and cultural freedom. This movement for national independence threatens European capital in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its military forces."\*

To this must be added that it is not only in newly opened-up countries, but also in the old, that imperialism is leading to annexation, to increased national oppression, and, consequently, also to increasing resistance. While objecting to the intensification of political reaction by imperialism, Kautsky leaves in the shade a question that has become particularly urgent, viz., the impossibility of unity with the opportunists in the epoch of imperialism. While objecting to annexations, he presents his objections in a form that is most acceptable and least offensive to the opportunists. He addresses himself to a German audience, yet he obscures the most topical and important point, for instance, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany. In order to appraise this "mental aberration" of Kautsky's I shall take the following example. Let us suppose that a Japanese condemns the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans. The question is: will many believe that he does so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines? And shall we not be constrained to admit that the "fight" the Japanese is waging against annexations can be regarded as being sincere and politically honest only if he

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\* *Finance Capital*, p. 487.

fight against the annexation of Korea by Japan, and urges freedom for Korea to secede from Japan?

Kautsky's theoretical analysis of imperialism, as well as his economic and political critique of imperialism, are permeated *through and through* with a spirit, absolutely irreconcilable with Marxism, of obscuring and glossing over the fundamental contradictions of imperialism and with a striving to preserve at all costs the crumbling unity with opportunism in the European working-class movement.

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## From THE JUNIUS PAMPHLET

The first of Junius's erroneous propositions is embodied in the fifth thesis of the *Internationale* group.<sup>61</sup> "National wars are no longer possible in the epoch (era) of this unbridled imperialism. National interests serve only as an instrument of deception, in order to place the working masses at the service of their mortal enemy, imperialism." The beginning of the fifth thesis, which concludes with the above statement, discusses the nature of the *present* war as an imperialist war. It may be that this negation of national wars generally is either an oversight, or an accidental overstatement in emphasising the perfectly correct idea that the *present* war is an imperialist war, not a national war. This is a mistake that must be examined, for various Social-Democrats, in view of the false assertions that the *present* war is a national war, have likewise mistakenly denied the possibility of *any* national war.

Junius is perfectly right in emphasising the decisive influence of the "imperialist atmosphere" of the *present* war, in maintaining that behind Serbia stands Russia, "behind Serbian nationalism stands Russian imperialism", and that the participation of, say, Holland in the war would *likewise* be imperialist, for, first, Holland would be defending her colonies and, second, would be allied with one of the *imperialist* coalitions. That is irrefutable in respect to the *present* war. And when Junius stresses what for him is most important, namely, the struggle against the "phantom of national war", "which at present holds sway over Social-Democratic policies" (p. 81), then it must be admitted that his views are both correct and fully to the point.

The only mistake, however, would be to exaggerate this truth, to depart from the Marxist requirement of concreteness, to apply the appraisal of this war to all wars possible

under imperialism, to ignore the national movements *against* imperialism. The sole argument in defence of the thesis, "national wars are no longer possible", is that the world has been divided among a small group of "great" imperialist powers and for that reason any war, even if it starts as a national war, is *transformed* into an imperialist war involving the interest of one of the imperialist powers or coalitions (Junius, p. 81).

The fallacy of this argument is obvious. That all dividing lines, both in nature and society, are conventional and dynamic, and that *every* phenomenon might, under certain conditions, be transformed into its opposite, is, of course, a basic proposition of Marxist dialectics. A national war *might* be transformed into an imperialist war *and vice versa*. Here is an example: the wars of the Great French Revolution began as national wars and indeed were such. They were revolutionary wars—the defence of the great revolution against a coalition of counter-revolutionary monarchies. But when Napoleon founded the French Empire and subjugated a number of big, viable and long-established national European states, these national wars of the French became imperialist wars and *in turn* led to wars of national liberation *against* Napoleonic imperialism.

Only a sophist can disregard the difference between an imperialist and a national war on the grounds that one *might* develop into the other. Not infrequently have dialectics served—and the history of Greek philosophy is an example—as a bridge to sophistry. But we remain dialecticians and we combat sophistry not by denying the possibility of all transformations in general, but by analysing the *given* phenomenon in its concrete setting and development.

Transformation of the present imperialist war of 1914-16 into a national war is highly improbable, for the class that represents *progressive* development is the proletariat which is objectively striving to transform it into a civil war against the bourgeoisie. Also this: there is no very considerable difference between the forces of the two coalitions, and international finance capital has created a reactionary bourgeoisie everywhere. But such a transformation should *not* be proclaimed *impossible*; if the *European* proletariat remains impotent, say, for twenty years; if the present war *ends* in victories like Napoleon's and in

the subjugation of a number of viable national states; *if* the transition to socialism of non-European imperialism (primarily Japanese and American) is also held up for twenty years by a war between these two countries, for example, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. It would hurl Europe *back* several decades. That is improbable. But *not* impossible, for it is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong to regard the course of world history as smooth and always in a forward direction, without occasional gigantic leaps back.

Further. National wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies in the imperialist era are not only probable but *inevitable*. About 1,000 million people, or *over half* of the world's population, live in the colonies and semi-colonies (China, Turkey, Persia). The national liberation movements there are either already very strong, or are growing and maturing. Every war is the continuation of politics by other means. The continuation of national liberation politics in the colonies will *inevitably* take the form of national wars *against* imperialism. Such wars *might* lead to an imperialist war of the present "great" imperialist powers, but on the other hand they might not. It will depend on many factors.

Example: Britain and France fought the Seven Years' War for the possession of colonies. In other words, they waged an imperialist war (which is possible on the basis of slavery and primitive capitalism as well as on the basis of modern highly developed capitalism). France suffered defeat and lost some of her colonies. Several years later there began the national liberation war of the North American States against Britain alone. France and Spain, then in possession of some parts of the present United States, concluded a friendship treaty with the States in rebellion against Britain. This they did out of hostility to Britain, i.e., in their own imperialist interests. French troops fought the British on the side of the American forces. What we have here is a national liberation war in which imperialist rivalry is an auxiliary element, one that has no serious importance. This is the very opposite to what we see in the war of 1914-16 (the national element in the Austro-Serbian War is of no serious importance compared with the all-determining element of imperialist rivalry). It would be



absurd, therefore, to apply the concept imperialism indiscriminately and conclude that national wars are "impossible". A national liberation war, waged, for example, by an alliance of Persia, India and China against one or more of the imperialist powers, is both possible and probable, for it would follow from the national liberation movements in these countries. The transformation of such a war into an imperialist war between the present-day imperialist powers would depend upon very many concrete factors, the emergence of which it would be ridiculous to guarantee.

Third, even in Europe national wars in the imperialist epoch cannot be regarded as impossible. The "epoch of imperialism" made the present war an imperialist one and it inevitably engenders new imperialist wars (until the triumph of socialism). This "epoch" has made the policies of the present great powers thoroughly imperialist, but it by no means precludes national wars on the part of, say, small (annexed or nationally-oppressed) countries *against* the imperialist powers, just as it does not preclude large-scale national movements in Eastern Europe. Junius takes a very sober view of Austria, for example, giving due consideration not only to "economic" factors, but to the peculiar political factors. He notes "Austria's intrinsic lack of cohesion" and recognises that the "Hapsburg monarchy is not the political organisation of a bourgeois state, but only a loose syndicate of several cliques of social parasites", and that "the liquidation of Austria-Hungary is, from the historical standpoint, only the continuation of the disintegration of Turkey and, at the same time, a requirement of the historical process of development". Much the same applies to some of the Balkan countries and Russia. And if the "great" powers are altogether exhausted in the present war, or if the revolution in Russia triumphs, national wars and even victorious national wars, are quite possible. Practical intervention by the imperialist powers is *not* always feasible. That is one point. Another is that the superficial view that the war of a small state against a giant is hopeless should be countered by the observation that even a hopeless war is a war just the same. Besides, certain factors operating within the "giant" countries—the outbreak of revolution, for example—can turn a "hopeless" war into a very "hopeful" one.

We have dwelt in detail on the erroneous proposition that "national wars are no longer possible" not only because it is patently erroneous from the theoretical point of view—it would certainly be very lamentable if the "Left" were to reveal a light-hearted attitude to Marxist theory at a time when the establishment of the Third International is possible only on the basis of unvulgarised Marxism. But the mistake is very harmful also from the standpoint of practical politics, for it gives rise to the absurd propaganda of "disarmament", since it is alleged that there can be no wars except reactionary wars. It also gives rise to the even more ludicrous and downright reactionary attitude of indifference to national movements. And such an attitude becomes chauvinism when members of the "great" European nations, that is, the nations which oppress the mass of small and colonial peoples, declare with a pseudo-scientific air: "national wars are no longer possible"! National wars *against* the imperialist powers are not only possible and probable; they are inevitable, *progressive* and *revolutionary* though of course, to be *successful*, they require either the concerted effort of huge numbers of people in the oppressed countries (hundreds of millions in our example of India and China), or a *particularly* favourable conjuncture of international conditions (e.g., the fact that the imperialist powers cannot interfere, being paralysed by exhaustion, by war, by their antagonism, etc.), or the *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the big powers (this latter eventuality holds first place as the most desirable and favourable for the victory of the proletariat).

It would be unfair, however, to accuse Junius of indifference to national movements. At any rate, he remarks that among the sins of the Social-Democratic parliamentary group was its silence on the death sentence passed on a native leader in the Cameroons on charges of "treason" (evidently he attempted to organise an uprising against the war). Elsewhere Junius especially emphasises (for the benefit of the Legiens, Lensches and the other scoundrels who are still listed as "Social-Democrats") that colonial peoples must be regarded as nations along with all the others. Junius clearly and explicitly states: "Socialism recognised the right of every nation to independence and

freedom, to independent mastery of its destinies"; "international socialism recognises the right of free, independent and equal nations, but it is only socialism that can create such nations, and only it can realise the right of nations to self-determination. And this socialist slogan," Junius justly remarks, "serves, like all other socialist slogans, not to justify the existing order of things, but to indicate the way forward, and to stimulate the proletariat in its active revolutionary policy of transformation" (pp. 77 and 78). It would be a grave mistake indeed to believe that all the German Left Social-Democrats have succumbed to the narrow-mindedness and caricature of Marxism now espoused by certain Dutch and Polish Social-Democrats who deny the right of nations to self-determination even under socialism. But the *specific*, Dutch-Polish, roots of *this* mistake we shall discuss elsewhere.

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## **From THE DISCUSSION ON SELF-DETERMINATION SUMMED UP**

### **6. IS IT RIGHT TO CONTRAST "EUROPE" WITH THE COLONIES IN THE PRESENT QUESTION?**

Our theses say that the demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies is as "impracticable" (that is, it cannot be effected without a number of revolutions and is not stable without socialism) under capitalism as the self-determination of nations, the election of civil servants by the people, the democratic republic, and so on—and, furthermore, that the demand for the liberation of the colonies is nothing more than "the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination".

The Polish comrades have not answered a single one of these arguments. They have tried to differentiate between "Europe" and the colonies. For Europe alone they become inconsistent annexationists by refusing to annul any annexations once these have been made. As for the colonies, they demand unconditionally: "Get out of the colonies!"

Russian socialists must put forward the demand: "Get out of Turkestan, Khiva, Bukhara, etc.", but, it is alleged, they would be guilty of "utopianism", "unscientific sentimentality" and so on if they demanded a similar freedom of secession for Poland, Finland, the Ukraine, etc. British socialists must demand: "Get out of Africa, India, Australia", but not out of Ireland. What are the theoretical grounds for a distinction that is so patently false? This question cannot be evaded.

The chief "ground" of those opposed to self-determination is its "impracticability". The same idea, with a nuance, is expressed in the reference to "economic and political concentration".

Obviously, concentration *also* comes about with the annexation of colonies. There was formerly an economic distinction between the colonies and the European peoples—at least, the majority of the latter—the colonies having been drawn into *commodity* exchange but not into capitalist *production*. Imperialism changed this. Imperialism is, among other things, the export of *capital*. Capitalist production is being transplanted to the colonies at an ever increasing rate. They cannot be extricated from dependence on European finance capital. From the military standpoint, as well as from the standpoint of expansion, the separation of the colonies is practicable, as a general rule, only under socialism; under capitalism it is practicable only by way of exception or at the cost of a series of revolts and revolutions both in the colonies and the metropolitan countries.

The greater part of the dependent nations in Europe are capitalistically more developed than the colonies (though not all, the exceptions being the Albanians and many non-Russian peoples in Russia). But it is just this that generates greater resistance to national oppression and annexations! Precisely because of this, the development of capitalism is *more secure* in Europe under any political conditions, including those of separation, than in the colonies.... “There,” the Polish comrades say about the colonies (I, 4), “capitalism is still confronted with the task of developing the productive forces independently....” This is even more noticeable in Europe: capitalism is undoubtedly developing the productive forces more vigorously, rapidly and independently in Poland, Finland, the Ukraine and Alsace than in India, Turkestan, Egypt and other straightforward colonies. In a commodity-producing society, no independent development, or development of any sort whatsoever, is possible without capital. In Europe the dependent nations have both *their own* capital and easy access to it on a wide range of terms. The colonies have no capital of *their own*, or none to speak of, and under finance capital no colony can obtain any except on terms of political submission. What then, in face of all this, is the significance of the demand to liberate the colonies immediately and unconditionally? Is it not clear that it is more “utopian” in the vulgar, caricature-“Marxist” sense of the word, “utopian”,



in the sense in which it is used by the Struves, Lensches, Cunows, with the Polish comrades unfortunately following in their footsteps? Any deviation from the ordinary, the commonplace, as well as everything that is revolutionary, is here labelled "utopianism". But revolutionary movements of *all* kinds—including national movements—are more possible, more practicable, more stubborn, more conscious and more difficult to defeat in Europe than they are in the colonies.

Socialism, say the Polish comrades (I, 3), "will be able to give the underdeveloped peoples of the colonies *unselfish cultural aid without ruling over them*". This is perfectly true. But what grounds are there for supposing that a great nation, a great state that goes over to socialism, will not be able to attract a small, oppressed European nation by means of "unselfish cultural aid"? It is the freedom to secede "*granted*" to the colonies by the Polish Social-Democrats that will attract the small but cultured and politically *exacting* oppressed nations of Europe to union with great socialist states, because under socialism a great state will mean so many hours *less* work a day and so much more *pay* a day. The masses of working people, as they liberate themselves from the bourgeois yoke, *will gravitate* irresistibly towards union and integration with the great, advanced socialist nations for the sake of that "cultural aid", provided yesterday's oppressors do not infringe on the long-oppressed nations' highly developed democratic feeling of self-respect, and provided they are granted equality in everything, including state construction, that is, experience in organising "their own" state. Under capitalism this "experience" means war, isolation, seclusion, and the narrow egoism of the small privileged nations (Holland, Switzerland). Under socialism the working people themselves will nowhere consent to seclusion merely for the above-mentioned purely economic motives, while the variety of political forms, freedom to secede, and experience in state organisation—there will be all this until the state in all its forms withers away—will be the basis of a prosperous cultured life and an earnest that the nations will draw closer together and integrate at an ever faster pace.

By setting the colonies aside and contrasting them to

Europe the Polish comrades step into a contradiction which immediately brings down the whole of their fallacious argument.

## 9. ENGELS'S LETTER TO KAUTSKY

In his pamphlet *Socialism and Colonial Politics* (Berlin, 1907), Kautsky, who was then still a Marxist, published a letter written to him by Engels, dated September 12, 1882, which is extremely interesting in relation to the question under discussion. Here is the principal part of the letter.

"In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population—Canada, the Cape, Australia—will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated—India, Algeria, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions—must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, make a revolution, and as a proletariat in process of self-emancipation cannot conduct any colonial wars, it would have to be allowed to run its course; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algeria and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing *for us*. We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is reorganised, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilised countries will of themselves follow in their wake; economic needs, if anything, will see to that. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organisation, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypotheses. One thing alone is certain: *the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing*. Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds..."

Engels does not at all suppose that the "economic" alone will directly remove all difficulties. An economic revolution will be a stimulus to *all* peoples to *strive* for socialism; but

at the same time revolutions—against the socialist state—and wars are possible. Politics will inevitably adapt themselves to the economy, but not immediately or smoothly, not simply, not directly. Engels mentions as “certain” only one, absolutely internationalist, principle, and this he applies to *all* “foreign nations”, i.e., not to colonial nations only: to force blessings upon them would mean to undermine the victory of the proletariat.

Just because the proletariat has carried out a social revolution it will not become holy and immune from errors and weaknesses. But it will be inevitably led to realise this truth by possible errors (and selfish interest—attempts to saddle others).

We of the Zimmerwald Left all hold the same conviction as Kautsky, for example, held before his desertion of Marxism for the defence of chauvinism in 1914, namely, that the socialist revolution is quite possible *in the very near future*—“any day”, as Kautsky himself once put it. National antipathies will not disappear so quickly: the hatred—and perfectly legitimate hatred—of an oppressed nation for its oppressor *will last* for a while; it will evaporate only *after* the victory of socialism and *after* the final establishment of completely democratic relations between nations. If we are to be faithful to socialism we must even now educate the masses in the spirit of internationalism, which is impossible in oppressor nations without advocating freedom of secession for oppressed nations.

## 10. THE IRISH REBELLION OF 1916

Our theses were written before the outbreak of this rebellion, which must be the touchstone of our theoretical views.

The views of the opponents of self-determination lead to the conclusion that the vitality of small nations oppressed by imperialism has already been sapped, that they cannot play any role against imperialism, that support of their purely national aspirations will lead to nothing, etc. The imperialist war of 1914-16 has provided *facts* which refute such conclusions.

The war proved to be an epoch of crisis for the West-European nations, and for imperialism as a whole. Every

crisis discards the conventionalities, tears away the outer wrappings, sweeps away the obsolete and reveals the underlying springs and forces. What has it revealed from the standpoint of the movement of oppressed nations? In the colonies there have been a number of attempts at rebellion, which the oppressor nations, naturally, did all they could to hide by means of a military censorship. Nevertheless, it is known that in Singapore the British brutally suppressed a mutiny among their Indian troops; that there were attempts at rebellion in French Annam (see *Nashe Slovo*) and in the German Cameroons (see the Junius pamphlet); that in Europe, on the one hand, there was a rebellion in Ireland, which the "freedom-loving" English, who did not dare to extend conscription to Ireland, suppressed by executions, and, on the other, the Austrian Government passed the death sentence on the deputies of the Czech Diet "for treason", and shot whole Czech regiments for the same "crime".

This list is, of course, far from complete. Nevertheless, it proves that, *owing* to the crisis of imperialism, the flames of national revolt have flared up *both* in the colonies and in Europe, and that national sympathies and antipathies have manifested themselves in spite of the Draconian threats and measures of repression. All this before the crisis of imperialism hit its peak; the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie was yet to be undermined (this may be brought about by a war of "attrition" but has not yet happened) and the proletarian movements in the imperialist countries were still very feeble. What will happen when the war has caused complete exhaustion, or when, in one state at least, the power of the bourgeoisie has been shaken under the blows of proletarian struggle, as that of tsarism in 1905?

On May 9, 1916, there appeared in *Berner Tagwacht*, the organ of the Zimmerwald group, including some of the Leftists, an article on the Irish rebellion entitled "Their Song Is Over" and signed with the initials K. R. It described the Irish rebellion as being nothing more nor less than a "putsch", for, as the author argued, "the Irish question was an agrarian one", the peasants had been pacified by reforms, and the nationalist movement remained only a "purely urban, petty-bourgeois movement, which, notwith-

standing the sensation it caused, had not much social backing”.

It is not surprising that this monstrously doctrinaire and pedantic assessment coincided with that of a Russian national-liberal Cadet, Mr. A. Kulisher (*Rech* No. 102, April 15, 1916), who also labelled the rebellion “the Dublin putsch”.

It is to be hoped that, in accordance with the adage, “it’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good”, many comrades, who were not aware of the morass they were sinking into by repudiating “self-determination” and by treating the national movements of small nations with disdain, will have their eyes opened by the “accidental” coincidence of opinion held by a Social-Democrat and a representative of the imperialist bourgeoisie!!

The term “putsch”, in its scientific sense, may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has aroused no sympathy among the masses. The centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest, manifested itself, in particular, in a mass Irish National Congress in America (*Vorwärts*, March 20, 1916) which called for Irish independence; it also manifested itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of newspapers, etc. Whoever calls *such* a rebellion a “putsch” is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon.

To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.—to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*. So one army lines up in one place and says, “We are for socialism”, and another, somewhere else and says, “We are for imperialism”, and that will be a social revolution!



Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a "putsch".

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which *all* the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these there were masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. But *objectively*, the mass movement was breaking the back of tsarism and paving the way for democracy; for this reason the class-conscious workers led it.

The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be* anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, mass struggle is *impossible*, without it *no* revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately "purge" itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

Social-Democracy, we read in the Polish theses (I, 4), "must utilise the struggle of the young colonial bourgeoisie against European imperialism *in order to sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe*". (Author's italics.)

Is it not clear that it is least of all permissible to contrast Europe to the colonies in *this* respect? The struggle of the oppressed nations *in Europe*, a struggle capable of going

all the way to insurrection and street fighting, capable of breaking down the iron discipline of the army and martial law, will "sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe" to an infinitely greater degree than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against the power of the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal force delivered in Asia or in Africa.

The French chauvinist press recently reported the publication in Belgium of the eightieth issue of an illegal journal, *Free Belgium*. Of course, the chauvinist press of France very often lies, but this piece of news seems to be true. Whereas chauvinist and Kautskyite German Social-Democracy has failed to establish a free press for itself during the two years of war, and has meekly borne the yoke of military censorship (only the Left Radical elements, to their credit be it said, have published pamphlets and manifestos, in spite of the censorship)—an oppressed civilised nation has reacted to a military oppression unparalleled in ferocity by establishing an organ of revolutionary protest! The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the *real* anti-imperialist force, the socialist proletariat, to make its appearance on the scene.

The general staffs in the current war are doing their utmost to utilise any national and revolutionary movement in the enemy camp: the Germans utilise the Irish rebellion, the French—the Czech movement, etc. They are acting quite correctly from their own point of view. A serious war would not be treated seriously if advantage were not taken of the enemy's slightest weakness and if every opportunity that presented itself were not seized upon, the more so since it is impossible to know beforehand at what moment, where, and with what force some powder magazine will "explode". We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the proletariat's great war of liberation for socialism, we did not know how to utilise *every* popular movement against *every single* disaster imperialism brings in order to intensify and extend the crisis. If we were, on the one hand, to

repeat in a thousand keys the declaration that we are "opposed" to all national oppression and, on the other, to describe the heroic revolt of the most mobile and enlightened section of certain classes in an oppressed nation against its oppressors as a "putsch", we should be sinking to the same level of stupidity as the Kautskyites.

It is the misfortune of the Irish that they rose prematurely, before the European revolt of the proletariat had *had time* to mature. Capitalism is not so harmoniously built that the various sources of rebellion can immediately merge of their own accord, without reverses and defeats. On the other hand, the very fact that revolts do break out at different times, in different places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement; but it is only in premature, individual, sporadic and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders, the socialist proletarians, and in this way prepare for the general onslaught, just as certain strikes, demonstrations, local and national, mutinies in the army, outbreaks among the peasantry, etc., prepared the way for the general onslaught in 1905.

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## From A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM

### 6. THE OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES RAISED AND DISTORTED BY P. KIEVSKY

Liberation of the colonies, we stated in our theses, means self-determination of nations. Europeans often forget that colonial peoples *too* are nations, but to tolerate this "forgetfulness" is to tolerate chauvinism.

P. Kievsky "objects":

In the pure type of colonies, "there is *no* proletariat in the proper sense of the term" (end of §r, Chapter II). "For whom, then, is the 'self-determination' slogan meant? For the colonial bourgeoisie? For the fellahs? For the peasants? Certainly not. It is absurd for *socialists* [Kievsky's italics] to demand self-determination for the colonies, for it is absurd in general to advance the slogans of a workers' party for countries where there are no workers."

P. Kievsky's anger and his denunciation of our view as "absurd" notwithstanding, we make bold to submit that his arguments are erroneous. Only the late and unlamented Economists<sup>62</sup> believed that the "slogans of a workers' party" are issued *only* for workers.\* No, these slogans are issued for the whole of the labouring population, for the entire people. The democratic part of our programme—Kievsky has given no thought to its significance "in general"—is addressed specifically to the whole people and that is why in it we speak of the "people".\*\*

The colonial and semi-colonial nations, we said, account for 1,000 million people, and P. Kievsky has not taken the trouble to refute that concrete statement. Of these 1,000

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\* P. Kievsky would do well to reread what A. Martynov and Co. wrote in 1899-1901. He would find many of his "own" arguments there.

\*\* Some curious opponents of "self-determination of nations" try to refute our views with the argument that "nations" are divided into classes! Our customary reply to these caricature Marxists is that the democratic part of our programme speaks of "government by the people".

million, more than 700 million (China, India, Persia, Egypt) live in countries where *there are* workers. But even with regard to colonial countries where there are no workers, only slave-owners and slaves, etc., the demand for "self-determination", far from being *absurd*, is *obligatory* for every Marxist. And if he gave the matter a little thought, Kievsky would probably realise this, and also that "self-determination" is always advanced "for" *two* nations: the oppressed and the *oppressing*.

Another of Kievsky's "objections":

"For that reason we limit ourselves, in respect to the colonies, to a negative slogan, i.e., to the demand socialists present to their governments—'get out of the colonies!' Unachievable within the framework of capitalism, this demand serves to intensify the struggle against imperialism, but does not contradict the trend of development, for a socialist society will not possess colonies."

The author's inability, or reluctance, to give the slightest thought to the theoretical contents of political slogans is simply amazing! Are we to believe that the use of a propaganda phrase instead of a theoretically precise political term alters matters? To say "get out of the colonies" is to evade a theoretical analysis and hide behind propaganda phrases! For every one of our Party propagandists, in referring to the Ukraine, Poland, Finland, etc., is fully entitled to demand of the tsarist government (his "own government"): "get out of Finland, etc." However, the intelligent propagandist will understand that we must not advance either positive or negative slogans for the sole purpose of "intensifying" the struggle. Only men of the Alexinsky<sup>63</sup> type could insist that the "negative" slogan "get out of the Black-Hundred Duma" was justified by the desire to "intensify" the struggle against a certain evil.

Intensification of the struggle is an empty phrase of the subjectivists, who forget the Marxist requirement that every slogan be justified by a precise analysis of *economic* realities, the *political* situation and the political significance of the slogan. It is embarrassing to have to drive this home, but what can one do?

We know the Alexinsky habit of cutting short a theoretical discussion of a theoretical question by propaganda outcries. It is a bad habit. The slogan "get out of the colonies" has one and only one political and economic content:



freedom of secession for the colonial nations, freedom to establish a separate state! If, as P. Kievsky believes, the *general* laws of imperialism prevent the self-determination of nations and make it a utopia, illusion, etc., etc., then how can one, without stopping to think, make an exception from these general laws for *most* of the nations of the world? Obviously, P. Kievsky's "theory" is a caricature of theory.

Commodity production and capitalism, and the connecting threads of finance capital, exist in the vast majority of colonial countries. How, then, can we urge the imperialist countries, their governments, to "get out of the colonies" if, *from the standpoint* of commodity production, capitalism and imperialism, this is an "unscientific" and "utopian" demand, "refuted" *even* by Lensch, Cunow and the rest?

There is not even a shadow of *thought* in the author's argumentation!

He has given no thought to the fact that liberation of the colonies is "unrealisable" *only* in the sense of being "unrealisable without a series of revolutions". He has given no thought to the fact that it is realisable *in conjunction* with a socialist revolution in Europe. He has given no thought to the fact that a "socialist society will not possess" *not only* colonies, but subject nations *in general*. He has given no thought to the fact that, on the question under discussion, there is *no* economic or political difference between Russia's "possession" of Poland or Turkestan. He has given no thought to the fact that a "socialist society" will wish to "get out of the colonies" *only* in the sense of granting them the free *right* to secede, but definitely *not* in the sense of *recommending secession*.

And for this differentiation between the right to secede and the recommendation to secede, P. Kievsky condemns us as "jugglers", and to "scientifically substantiate" that verdict in the eyes of the workers, he writes:

"What is a worker to think when he asks a propagandist how the proletariat should regard *samostiinost* [political independence for the Ukraine], and gets this answer: socialists are working for the right to secede, but their propaganda is against secession?"

I believe I can give a fairly accurate reply to that question, namely: every sensible worker will *think* that Kievsky is *not capable of thinking*.

Every sensible worker will "think": here we have P. Kievsky telling us workers to shout "get out of the colonies". In other words, we Great-Russian workers must demand from our government that it get out of Mongolia, Turkestan, Persia; English workers must demand that the English Government get out of Egypt, India, Persia, etc. But does this mean that *we* proletarians *wish* to separate ourselves from the Egyptian workers and fellahs, from the Mongolian, Turkestan or Indian workers and peasants? Does it mean that *we* advise the labouring masses of the colonies to "separate" from the class-conscious European proletariat? Nothing of the kind. Now, as always, we stand and shall continue to stand for the closest association and merging of the class-conscious workers of the advanced countries with the workers, peasants and slaves of *all* the oppressed countries. We have always advised and shall continue to advise all the oppressed classes in all the oppressed countries, the colonies included, *not* to separate from us, but to form the closest possible ties and merge with us.

We demand from our governments that they quit the colonies, or, to put it in precise political terms rather than in agitational outcries—that they *grant* the colonies full *freedom* of secession, the genuine *right to self-determination*, and we ourselves are sure to implement this right, and grant this freedom, as soon as we capture power. We demand this from existing governments, and will *do* this when we are the government, *not* in order to "recommend" secession, but, on the contrary, in order to facilitate and accelerate the *democratic* association and merging of nations. We shall exert every effort to foster association and merger with the Mongolians, Persians, Indians, Egyptians. We believe it is our duty and *in our interest* to do this, for otherwise socialism in Europe will *not be secure*. We shall endeavour to render these nations, more backward and oppressed than we are, "disinterested cultural assistance", to borrow the happy expression of the Polish Social-Democrats. In other words, we will help them pass to the use of machinery, to the lightening of labour, to democracy, to socialism. If we demand freedom of secession for the Mongolians, Persians, Egyptians and *all* other oppressed and unequal nations without exception, we do so not because

*we favour secession, but only because we stand for free, voluntary association and merging as distinct from forcible association. That is the only reason!*

And in this respect the *only* difference between the Mongolian or Egyptian peasants and workers and their Polish or Finnish counterparts is, in our view, that the latter are more developed, more experienced politically than the Great Russians, more economically prepared, etc., and for that reason will in all likelihood *very soon* convince their peoples that it is unwise to extend their present legitimate hatred of the Great Russians, for their role of hangman, to the *socialist* workers and to a socialist Russia. They will convince them that economic expediency and internationalist and democratic instinct and consciousness demand the earliest association of all nations and their merging in a socialist society. And since the Poles and Finns are highly cultured people, they will, in all probability, very soon come to see the correctness of this attitude, and the possible secession of Poland and Finland after the triumph of socialism will therefore be only of short duration. The incomparably less cultured fellahs, Mongolians and Persians might secede for a longer period, but we shall try to shorten it by disinterested cultural assistance as indicated above.

There is *no* other difference in our attitude to the Poles and Mongolians, nor can there be. There is *no* "contradiction", nor can there be, between our propaganda of freedom of secession and our firm resolve to implement that freedom when *we* are the government, and our propaganda of association and merging of nations. That is what, we feel sure, every sensible worker, every genuine socialist and internationalist will "think" of our controversy with P. Kievsky.\*

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\* Evidently Kievsky simply *repeated* the slogan "get out of the colonies", advanced by certain German and Dutch Marxists, without considering not only its theoretical content and implications, but also the specific features of Russia. It is pardonable—to a certain extent—for a Dutch or German Marxist to confine himself to the slogan "get out of the colonies". For, first, the *typical* form of national oppression, in the case of most West-European countries, is oppression of the colonies, and, second, the very term "colony" has an especially clear, graphic and vital meaning for West-European countries.

But what of Russia? Its peculiarity lies precisely in the fact that the difference between "*our*" "colonies" and "*our*" oppressed nations is not clear, not concrete and not vitally felt!

Running through the article is Kievsky's basic doubt: why advocate and, when we are in power, implement the freedom of nations to *secede*, considering that the trend of development is towards the *merging* of nations? For the same reason—we reply—that we advocate and, when in power, will implement the dictatorship of the proletariat, though the entire trend of development is towards abolition of coercive domination of one part of society over another. Dictatorship is domination of one part of society over the rest of society, and domination, moreover, that rests directly on coercion. Dictatorship of the proletariat, the only consistently revolutionary class, is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and repel its attempts at counter-revolution. The question of proletarian dictatorship is of such overriding importance that he who denies the need for such dictatorship, or recognises it only in words, cannot be a member of the Social-Democratic Party. However, it cannot be denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, for instance, in some small country after the social revolution has been accomplished in a neighbouring big country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is *possible*, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the *only* programme of international Social-Democracy must be recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals. The same, *mutatis mutandis* (with the *necessary* alterations), is applicable to nations. We favour their merger, but *now* there can be no transition from forcible merger and annexation to voluntary merger without freedom of secession. We recognise—and quite rightly—the predominance of the economic factor, but to interpret it *à la* Kievsky is to make a caricature of Marxism. Even the trusts and banks of modern imperialism, though inevitable everywhere as part of developed capitalism, differ in their concrete aspects from country to country. There is a still

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For a Marxist writing in, say, German it might be pardonable to overlook *this* peculiarity of Russia; for Kievsky it is unpardonable. The sheer absurdity of trying to discover some serious difference between oppressed nations and colonies in the case of Russia should be especially clear to a Russian socialist who wants not simply to *repeat*, but to *think*.

greater difference, despite homogeneity in essentials, between political forms in the advanced imperialist countries—America, England, France, Germany. The same variety will manifest itself also in the path mankind will follow from the imperialism of today to the socialist revolution of tomorrow. All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life. There is nothing more primitive from the viewpoint of theory, or more ridiculous from that of practice, than to paint, “in the name of historical materialism”, *this* aspect of the future in a monotonous grey. The result will be nothing more than Suzdal daubing.<sup>63</sup> And even if reality were to show that *prior* to the first victory of the socialist proletariat only 1/500 of the nations now oppressed will win emancipation and secede, that *prior* to the final victory of the socialist proletariat the world over (i.e., during all the vicissitudes of the socialist revolution) also only 1/500 of the oppressed nations will secede for a very short time—even in that event we would be correct, both from the theoretical and practical political standpoint, in advising the workers, already now, not to permit into their Social-Democratic parties those socialists of the oppressor nations who do not recognise and do not advocate freedom of secession for *all* oppressed nations. For the fact is that we do not know, and cannot know, how many of the oppressed nations will in practice require secession in order to contribute something of their own to the different *forms* of democracy, the different *forms* of transition to socialism. And that the negation of freedom of secession now is theoretically false from beginning to end and in practice amounts to servility to the chauvinists of the oppressing nations—this we know, see and feel daily.

Written August-October 1916

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Signed: V. Lenin

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 23, pp. 63-70



## From AN OPEN LETTER TO BORIS SOUVARINE

Souvarine says he wants to "examine the facts from a Marxist viewpoint".

But from a Marxist viewpoint, such general and abstract definitions as "unpatriotic" are of absolutely no value. The fatherland, the nation are historical categories. I am not at all opposed to wars waged in defence of democracy or against national oppression, nor do I fear such words as "defence of the fatherland" in reference to these wars or to insurrections. Socialists always side with the oppressed and, consequently, cannot be opposed to wars whose purpose is democratic or socialist struggle against oppression. It would therefore be absurd to deny the legitimacy of the wars of 1793, of France's wars against the reactionary European monarchies, or of the Garibaldi wars, etc. . . . And it would be just as absurd not to recognise the legitimacy of wars of oppressed nations against their oppressors, wars that might break out today—rebellion of the Irish against England, for instance, rebellion of Morocco against France, or the Ukraine against Russia, etc. . . .

The Marxist viewpoint requires that in each individual case we define the political content of the war.

But what determines the political content of a war?

Every war is only the continuation of policy. What kind of policy is being continued in the present war? The policy of the proletariat, which from 1871 to 1914 was the sole exponent of socialism and democracy in France, England and Germany? Or imperialist policy, the policy of colonial rapine and oppression of weak nations by the reactionary, decadent and moribund bourgeoisie?

The question has only to be squarely put and we get a perfectly clear answer: the present war is an imperialist war. It is a war of slave-owners quarrelling over their

chattels and eager to consolidate and perpetuate slavery. It is the "capitalist brigandage" of which Jules Guesde spoke in 1899, thereby condemning in advance his own betrayal. Guesde said at the time:

"There are other wars . . . they arise every day, wars for the acquisition of markets. This kind of war does not disappear, but, on the contrary, bids fair to become continuous. It is chiefly a war between the capitalists of all countries for profits and possession of the world market, and it is fought at the price of our blood. Now, just imagine that in each of the capitalist countries of Europe, this mutual slaughter for the sake of plunder is directed by a socialist! Just imagine an English Millerand, an Italian Millerand, a German Millerand, in addition to a French Millerand,<sup>61</sup> working to embroil the proletarians in this capitalist brigandage and make them fight each other! What would remain, I ask you, comrades, of international solidarity? On the day the Millerands became a common phenomenon, we would have to say 'farewell' to all internationalism and become nationalists, and this neither you nor I will ever agree to" (Jules Guesde, *En Garde!*, Paris, 1911, pp. 175-76).

It is not true that France is waging this 1914-17 war for freedom, national independence, democracy, and so on. . . . She is fighting to retain her colonies, and for England to retain hers, colonies to which Germany would have had a much greater right—from the standpoint of bourgeois law, of course. She is fighting to give Russia Constantinople, etc. . . . Consequently, this war is being waged not by democratic and revolutionary France, not by the France of 1792, nor the France of 1848, nor the France of the Commune. It is being waged by bourgeois France, reactionary France, that ally and friend of tsarism, the "world usurer" (the expression is not mine, it belongs to Lysis, a contributor to *l'Humanité*), who is defending his booty, his "sacred right" to possess colonies, his "freedom" to exploit the entire world with the help of the millions loaned to weaker or poorer nations.

Do not tell me it is hard to distinguish between revolutionary and reactionary wars. You want me to indicate a purely practical criterion that would be understood by all, in addition to the scientific criterion indicated above?

Here it is: Every fair-sized war is prepared beforehand. When a revolutionary war is being prepared, democrats and socialists *are not afraid to state in advance* that they favour "defence of the fatherland" in this war. When however, in contrast, a reactionary war is being prepared, no

socialist will *venture to state in advance*, before war is declared, that is, that he will favour "defence of the fatherland".

Marx and Engels were not afraid to urge the German people to fight Russia in 1848 and 1959.

*In contrast, at their Basle Congress<sup>64</sup> in 1912 the socialists did not venture to speak of "defence of the fatherland" in the war they could see was maturing and which broke out in 1914.*

Our Party is not afraid to declare publicly that it will sympathise with wars or uprisings which Ireland might start against England; Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia against France; Tripoli against Italy; the Ukraine, Persia, China against Russia, etc.

But what of the social-chauvinists? And the "Centrists"?<sup>65</sup> Will they have the courage openly and officially to state that they favour, or will favour, "defence of the fatherland" in the event of war breaking out between, say, Japan and the United States, a clearly imperialist war prepared over the course of many years, and one which would imperil many hundreds of millions of people? I dare them! I am prepared to wager that they will not, for they know only too well that if they make such a statement, they will become a laughing-stock in the eyes of the workers, they will be jeered at and driven out of the socialist parties. That is why the social-chauvinists and those in the "Centre" will avoid any open statement and will continue to wriggle, lie and confuse the issue, seeking refuge in all manner of sophisms, like this one in the resolution of the last, 1915 French party congress: "An attacked country has the right to defence."

As if the question were: *Who was the first to attack*, and not: *What are the causes of the war? What are its aims? Which classes are waging it?* Could one imagine, for example, a sane-minded socialist recognising England's right to "defence of the fatherland" in 1796, when the French revolutionary troops began to fraternise with the Irish? And yet it was the French who had attacked England and were actually preparing to land in Ireland. And could we, tomorrow, recognise the right to "defence of the fatherland" for Russia and England, if, after they had been taught a lesson by Germany, they were attacked by Persia in alliance with

India, China and other revolutionary nations of Asia performing their 1789 and 1793?

That is my reply to the really ludicrous charge that we share Tolstoy's views. Our Party has rejected both the Tolstoy doctrine and pacifism, declaring that socialists must seek to transform the present war into a civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, for socialism.

Should you object that this is utopian, I will answer that the bourgeoisie of France, England, etc., do not, apparently, subscribe to that opinion. They would not play so vile and ridiculous a role, going to the length of jailing or conscripting "pacifists", had they not felt and foreseen the inevitable and steady rise of revolution and its early approach.

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1929

## From LECTURE ON THE 1905 REVOLUTION

Geographically, economically and historically, Russia belongs not only to Europe, but also to Asia. That is why the Russian revolution succeeded not only in finally awakening Europe's biggest and most backward country and in creating a revolutionary people led by a revolutionary proletariat.

It achieved more than that. The Russian revolution engendered a movement throughout the whole of Asia. The revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China prove that the mighty uprising of 1905 left a deep imprint, and that its influence, expressed in the forward movement of *hundreds and hundreds* of millions, is ineradicable.

Written in German before  
January 9 (22), 1917

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No. 18, January 22, 1925

Signed: *N. Lenin*



## MANDATE TO DEPUTIES OF THE SOVIET ELECTED AT FACTORIES AND REGIMENTS

(1) Our Deputy must be unconditionally opposed to the present predatory imperialist war. This war is waged by the capitalists of all countries—Russia, Germany, Britain, etc.—for profits, and the subjugation of the weak nations.

(2) So long as a capitalist government is at the head of the Russian nation, there must be no support for the government, which is carrying on a predatory war—not by a single kopek!

(3) Our Deputy must stand for the immediate publication of the secret predatory treaties (relating to the subjugation of Persia, the partition of Turkey, Austria, etc.), which ex-Tsar Nicholas concluded with the capitalists of Britain, France, etc.

(4) Our Deputy must stand for the immediate abrogation of all these treaties. The Russian people, the workers and the peasants, do not wish to oppress and will not oppress any nation; they do not wish to and will not hold by force within the boundaries of Russia a single non-Russian (non-Great-Russian) nation. Freedom for all the peoples, a fraternal union of the workers and peasants of all nationalities!

(5) Our Deputy must stand for the Russian Government offering openly, immediately and unconditionally, without equivocation and without the least delay, terms of peace to *all* the belligerent countries on the basis of freedom for *all* the oppressed or underprivileged nationalities *without exception*.

This means that the Great Russians shall not forcibly retain either Poland, or Kurland, or Ukraine, or Finland, or Armenia, or any other nation. The Great Russians offer a fraternal union to all the nations and propose the forma-

tion of a common state by voluntary consent of each individual people, and under no circumstances by means of violence, direct or indirect. The Great Russians, under the terms of such a peace, undertake immediately to withdraw their troops from Galicia, from Armenia, and from Persia, and to allow these nations and *all* other nations without exception freely to decide whether they wish to live as a separate state, or in union with whomsoever they please.

Germany, by the terms of such a peace, must not only relinquish *all* the territories she has seized since the beginning of the war, but also release the peoples she is keeping by force within the boundaries of Germany, namely, the Danes (Schleswig), the French (part of Alsace and Lorraine), the Poles (Poznan), etc. Germany must undertake immediately, and simultaneously with Russia, to withdraw her troops from all the regions she has seized, as well as from all the regions mentioned above, and allow each nation to decide freely, by a popular vote, whether it wishes to live as a separate state, or in union *with whomsoever it pleases*. Germany must unconditionally and unequivocally relinquish all her colonies, for colonies are oppressed peoples.

Britain, by the terms of such a peace, must relinquish, immediately and unconditionally, not only the territories she has seized from others (the German colonies in Africa, etc., the Turkish lands, Mesopotamia, etc.), but *all her own colonies* as well. Britain, like Russia and Germany, must immediately withdraw her troops from all the territories she has seized, from her colonies, and also from Ireland, and let each nation decide by a free vote whether it wants to live as a separate state, or in union with whomsoever it wishes.

And so on: all the belligerent countries, without exception, must receive an offer to conclude an immediate peace on these clearly defined terms. The capitalists of *all* countries should no longer deceive the peoples by promising "peace without annexations" while holding on to *their own* annexed territories and continuing the war in order to wrest from the enemy "his own" annexed territories.

(6) Our Deputy must not give any support, or vote for any loan, or give a kopek of the people's money to *any*

government that does not solemnly undertake immediately to offer to all the nations these terms for an immediate peace and to publish this offer within *two days* for everybody's information.

(7) . . .\*

Written before May 7 (20), 1917

*Collected Works,*  
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First published in 1925  
in *Lenin Miscellany IV*

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\* Here the manuscript breaks off—*Ed.*

## SECRETS OF FOREIGN POLICY

What a pity that the masses cannot read books on the history of diplomacy, or the editorials in the capitalist newspapers. And an even greater pity—though in this case pity is too feeble a word—that the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik ministers and their ministeriable colleagues should maintain such a discreet silence on certain facts of diplomatic history and on the utterances of the “great diplomatic minds”, though these are only too well known to them.

*Rech* quotes what it claims to be a reliable report in *Birzhevka*<sup>66</sup> to the effect that Britain is quite prepared to renounce the “dismemberment of Turkey and partitioning of Austria-Hungary”. In other words, Britain readily consents to Russia *not* getting the annexations promised her under earlier treaties (Constantinople, Armenia, Galicia). In *this* sense—and in this sense alone—Britain is prepared to revise the treaties.

And *Rech* waxes indignant:

“So this is the first result of the triumph of the new slogan [the slogan of peace without annexations and indemnities]. The agreements will very likely be revised: our Allies—not we—are already taking ‘preparatory steps’ towards that end. The result of this revision, however, will be not a uniform [mark this!] renunciation of the major objectives of all the Allies, but a one-sided [isn’t that a gem?] renunciation of the objectives in South-Eastern Europe [read: in Austria and Turkey, i.e., the plundering of Armenia, Constantinople, Galicia], in favour of objectives in other areas and in the colonies, formulated not by us but by our Allies.

“In particular, there have been press reports suggesting that our Allies might abandon their objectives in Asia Minor. True, there is so far no official confirmation of the statements to that effect said to have been made by Albert Thomas in the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and reported in the Moscow press. It would be difficult, however, to expect any such action as far as Britain is concerned. For Britain takes the correct view that possession is nine-tenths

of the law [mark this!] and her troops are already occupying parts of Mesopotamia and Palestine which are of vital interest to her [read: to her capitalists]. In these circumstances, Britain's refusal to fight for the vital interests of the *other* [*Rech's italics*] Allies would, of course, likewise be a one-sided act advantageous to her alone."

Truly, Milyukov, or whoever it was wrote these lines, deserves to have a monument set up to him in his lifetime . . . for frankness. Bravo, candid *Rech* diplomats! (And why are they candid? Because they were angered at Milyukov being deprived of his portfolio.)

Everything that has been said in the lines quoted above is the truth, a truth confirmed by the recent history of diplomacy and the history of foreign investments. Britain at any rate will not renounce the seizure (annexation) of Palestine and Mesopotamia, though she is prepared to punish the Russians (for the "virtual armistice" on the Russian-German front) by denying them Galicia, Constantinople, Armenia, etc. That, in plain, non-diplomatic language, is the meaning of these statements in *Rech*.

And the Russian capitalists for whom *Rech* speaks can barely hold back their anger. Foaming at the mouth, they are blurting out the secrets of foreign policy and taking digs at the British capitalists: what you are doing is "one-sided", it is to your "advantage", and to the disadvantage of *others*.

Comrades, workers and soldiers! Consider these strikingly frank and strikingly truthful statements of *Rech*, coming from *well-informed* diplomats and former ministers, consider this excellent exposure of the *real aims* which not only the Russian, but the British capitalists, too, are pursuing in the war.

Russian soldiers! Do you want to fight to help the British capitalists seize Mesopotamia and Palestine? Do you want to support the Russian Government of Lvov, Chernov, Tereshchenko, Tsereteli, a government bound by the interests of the capitalists and *afraid* openly to state the true facts which have been blurred out by *Rech*?



## From WAR AND REVOLUTION

A LECTURE DELIVERED MAY 14 (27), 1917

We all know the dictum of Clausewitz, one of the most famous writers on the philosophy and history of war, which says: "War is a continuation of policy by other means." This dictum comes from a writer who reviewed the history of wars and drew philosophic lessons from it shortly after the period of the Napoleonic wars. This writer, whose basic views are now undoubtedly familiar to every thinking person, nearly eighty years ago challenged the ignorant man-in-the-street conception of war as being a thing apart from the policies of the governments and classes concerned, as being a simple attack that disturbs the peace, and is then followed by restoration of the peace thus disturbed, as much as to say: "They had a fight, then they made up!" This is a grossly ignorant view, one that was repudiated scores of years ago and is repudiated by any more or less careful analysis of any historical epoch of wars.

War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed.

War is a continuation of policy by other means. When the French revolutionary townspeople and revolutionary peasants overthrew the monarchy at the close of the eighteenth century by revolutionary means and established a democratic republic—when they made short work of their monarch, and short work of their landowners, too, in a revolutionary fashion—that policy of the revolutionary class was bound to shake all the rest of autocratic, tsarist, imperial, and semi-feudal Europe to its foundations. And

the inevitable continuation of this policy of the victorious revolutionary class in France was the wars in which all the monarchist nations of Europe, forming their famous coalition, lined up against revolutionary France in a counter-revolutionary war. Just as within the country the revolutionary people of France had then, for the first time, displayed revolutionary energy on a scale it had never shown for centuries, so in the war at the close of the eighteenth century it revealed a similar gigantic revolutionary creativeness when it remodelled its whole system of strategy, broke with all the old rules and traditions of warfare, replaced the old troops with a new revolutionary people's army, and created new methods of warfare. This example, to my mind, is noteworthy in that it clearly demonstrates to us things which the bourgeois journalists are now always forgetting when they pander to the philistine prejudices and ignorance of the backward masses who do not understand this intimate economic and historical connection between every kind of war and the preceding policy of every country, every class that ruled before the war and achieved its ends by so-called "peaceful" means. So-called, because the brute force required to ensure "peaceful" rule in the colonies, for example, can hardly be called peaceful.

Peace reigned in Europe, but this was because domination over hundreds of millions of people in the colonies by the European nations was sustained only through constant, incessant, interminable wars, which we Europeans do not regard as wars at all, since all too often they resembled, not wars, but brutal massacres, the wholesale slaughter of unarmed peoples. The thing is that if we want to know what the present war is about we must first of all make a general survey of the policies of the European powers as a whole. We must not take this or that example, this or that particular case, which can easily be wrenched out of the context of social phenomena and which is worthless, because an opposite example can just as easily be cited. We must take the whole policy of the entire system of European states in their economic and political interrelations if we are to understand how the present war steadily and inevitably grew out of this system.

We are constantly witnessing attempts, especially on the part of the capitalist press—whether monarchist or re-

publican—to read into the present war an historical meaning which it does not possess. For example, no device is more frequently resorted to in the French Republic than that of presenting this war on France's part as a continuation and counterpart of the wars of the Great French Revolution of 1792. No device for hoodwinking the French masses, the French workers and the workers of all countries is more widespread than that of applying to our epoch the "jargon" of that other epoch and some of its watchwords, or the attempt to present matters as though now, too, republican France is defending her liberty against the monarchy. One "minor" fact overlooked is that then, in 1792, war was waged in France by a revolutionary class, which had carried out an unparalleled revolution and displayed unmatched heroism in utterly destroying the French monarchy and rising against a united monarchist Europe with the sole and single aim of carrying on its revolutionary struggle.

The war in France was a continuation of the policy of the revolutionary class which had carried out the revolution, won the republic, settled accounts with the French capitalists and landowners with unprecedented vigour, and was waging a revolutionary war against a united monarchist Europe in continuation of that policy.

What we have at present is primarily two leagues, two groups of capitalist powers. We have before us all the world's greatest capitalist powers—Britain, France, America, and Germany—who for decades have doggedly pursued a policy of incessant economic rivalry aimed at achieving world supremacy, subjugating the small nations, and making threefold and tenfold profits on banking capital, which has caught the whole world in the net of its influence. That is what Britain's and Germany's policies really amount to. I stress this fact. This fact can never be emphasised strongly enough, because if we forget this we shall never understand what this war is about, and we shall then be easy game for any bourgeois publicist who tries to foist lying phrases on us.

The real policies of the two groups of capitalist giants—Britain and Germany, who, with their respective allies, have taken the field against each other—policies which they were pursuing for decades before the war, should be studied and grasped in their entirety. If we did not do this

we should not only be neglecting an essential requirement of scientific socialism and of all social science in general, but we should be unable to understand anything whatever about the present war. We should be putting ourselves in the power of Milyukov, that deceiver, who is stirring up chauvinism and hatred of one nation for another by methods which are applied everywhere without exception, methods which Clausewitz wrote about eighty years ago when he ridiculed the very view some people are holding today, namely, that the nations lived in peace and then they started fighting. As if this were true! How can a war be accounted for without considering its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes? I repeat: this is a basic point which is constantly overlooked. Failure to understand it makes nine-tenths of all war discussions mere wrangling, so much verbiage. We say: if you have not studied the policies of both belligerent groups over a period of decades—so as to avoid accidental factors and the quoting of random examples—if you have not shown what bearing this war has on preceding policies, then you don't understand what this war is all about.

These policies show us just one thing—continuous economic rivalry between the world's two greatest giants, capitalist economies. On the one hand we have Britain, a country which owns the greater part of the globe, a country which ranks first in wealth, which has created this wealth not so much by the labour of its workers as by the exploitation of innumerable colonies, by the vast power of its banks which have developed at the head of all the others into an insignificantly small group of some four or five super-banks handling billions of rubles, and handling them in such a way that it can be said without exaggeration that there is not a patch of land in the world today on which this capital has not laid its heavy hand, not a patch of land which British capital has not enmeshed by a thousand threads. This capital grew to such dimensions by the turn of the century that its activities extended far beyond the borders of individual states and formed a group of giant banks possessed of fabulous wealth. Having begotten this tiny group of banks, it has caught the whole world in the net of its billions. This is the sum and substance of Britain's economic policy and of the economic policy of France, of



which even French writers, some of them contributors to *l'Humanité*, a paper now controlled by ex-socialists (in fact, no less a man than Lysis, the well-known financial writer), stated several years before the war: "France is a financial monarchy, France is a financial oligarchy, France is the world's money-lender."

On the other hand, opposed to this, mainly Anglo-French group, we have another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, a group who came to the capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for developing capitalist production, improved techniques, and superior organisation, which turned the old capitalism, the capitalism of the free-competition age, into the capitalism of giant trusts, syndicates, and cartels. This group introduced the beginnings of state-controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organisation of state capitalism. Here is economic history, here is diplomatic history, covering several decades, from which no one can get away. It is the one and only guide-post to a proper solution of the problem of war; it leads you to the conclusion that the present war, too, is the outcome of the policies of the classes who have come to grips in it, of the two supreme giants, who, long before the war, had caught the whole world, all countries, in the net of financial exploitation and economically divided the globe up among themselves. They were bound to clash, because a redivision of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable.

The old division was based on the fact that Britain, in the course of several centuries, had ruined her former competitors. A former competitor was Holland, which had dominated the whole world. Another was France, which had fought for supremacy for nearly a hundred years. After a series of protracted wars Britain was able, by virtue of her economic power, her merchant capital, to establish her unchallenged sway over the world. In 1871 a new predator appeared, a new capitalist power arose, which developed at an incomparably faster pace than Britain. That is a basic fact. You will not find a book on economic history that does



not acknowledge this indisputable fact—the fact of Germany's faster development. This rapid development of capitalism in Germany was the development of a young strong predator, who appeared in the concert of European powers and said: "You ruined Holland, you defeated France, you have helped yourself to half the world—now be good enough to let us have our fair share." What does a "fair share" mean? How is it to be determined in the capitalist world, in the world of banks? There power is determined by the number of banks, there power is determined in the way described by a mouthpiece of the American multimillionaires, which declared with typically American frankness and typically American cynicism: "The war in Europe is being waged for world domination. To dominate the world two things are needed: dollars and banks. We have the dollars, we shall make the banks and we shall dominate the world." This statement was made by a leading newspaper of the American multimillionaires. I must say, there is a thousand times more truth in this cynical statement of a blustering American multimillionaire than in thousands of articles by bourgeois liars who try to make out that this war is being waged for national interests, on national issues, and utter similar glaringly patent lies which dismiss history completely and take an isolated example like the case of the German beast of prey who attacked Belgium. The case is undoubtedly a real one. This group of predators did attack Belgium with brutal ferocity, but it did the same thing the other group did yesterday by other means and is doing today to other nations.

When we argue about annexations—and this bears on the question I have been trying briefly to explain to you as the history of the economic and diplomatic relations which led up to the present war—when we argue about annexations we always forget that these, generally, are what the war is being waged for; it is for the carve-up of conquered territories, or, to put it more popularly, for the division of the plundered spoils by the two robber gangs. When we argue about annexations we constantly meet with methods which, scientifically speaking, do not stand up to criticism, and which, as methods of public journalism, are deliberate humbug. Ask a Russian chauvinist or social-chauvinist what annexation by Germany means, and he will give you an

excellent explanation, because he understands that perfectly well. But he will never answer a request for a general definition of annexation that will fit them all—Germany, Britain, and Russia. He will never do that! And when *Rech* (to pass from theory to practice) sneered at *Pravda*, saying, “These Pravdists consider Kurland a case of annexation! How can you talk to such people!” and we answered: “Please give us such a definition of annexation as would apply to the Germans, the English, and the Russians, and we add that either you evade this issue or we shall expose you on the spot”—*Rech* kept silent. We maintain that no newspaper, either of the chauvinists in general, who simply say that the fatherland must be defended, or of the social-chauvinists, has ever given a definition of annexation that would fit both Germany and Russia, that would be applicable to any side. It cannot do this for the simple reason that this war is the continuation of a policy of annexations, that is, a policy of conquest, of capitalist robbery on the part of both groups involved in the war. Obviously, the question of which of these two robbers was the first to draw the knife is of small account to us. Take the history of the naval and military expenditures of these two groups over a period of decades, take the history of the little wars they waged before the big war—“little” because few Europeans died in those wars, whereas hundreds of thousands of people belonging to the nations they were subjugating died in them, nations which from their point of view could not be regarded as nations at all (you couldn’t very well call those Asians and Africans nations!); the wars waged against these nations were wars against unarmed people, who were simply shot down, machine-gunned. Can you call them wars? Strictly speaking, they were not wars at all, and you could forget about them. That is their attitude to this downright deception of the masses.

The present war is a continuation of the policy of conquest, of the shooting down of whole nationalities, of unbelievable atrocities committed by the Germans and the British in Africa, and by the British and the Russians in Persia—which of them committed most it is difficult to say. It was for this reason that the German capitalists looked upon them as their enemies. Ah, they said, you are strong because you are rich? But we are stronger, therefore

we have the same "sacred" right to plunder. That is what the real history of British and German finance capital in the course of several decades preceding the war amounts to. That is what the history of Russo-German, Russo-British, and German-British relations amounts to. There you have the clue to an understanding of what the war is about. That is why the story that is current about the cause of the war is sheer duplicity and humbug. Forgetting the history of finance capital, the history of how this war had been brewing over the issue of redivision, they present the matter like this: two nations were living at peace, then one attacked the other, and the other fought back. All science, all banks are forgotten, and the peoples are told to take up arms, and so are the peasants, who know nothing about politics. All they have to do is to fight back! The logical thing, following this line of argument, would be to close down all newspapers, burn all books and ban all mention of annexations in the press. In this way such a view of annexations could be justified. They can't tell the truth about annexations because the whole history of Russia, Britain, and Germany has been one of continuous, ruthless and sanguinary war over annexations. Ruthless wars were waged in Persia and Africa by the Liberals, who flogged political offenders in India for daring to put forward demands which were being fought for here in Russia. The French colonial troops oppressed peoples too. There you have the pre-history, the real history of unprecedented plunder! Such is the policy of these classes, of which the present war is a continuation. That is why, on the question of annexations, they cannot give the reply that we give, when we say that any nation joined to another one, not by the voluntary choice of its majority but by a decision of a king or government, is an annexed nation. To renounce annexation is to give each nation the right to form a separate state or to live in union with whomsoever it chooses. An answer like that is perfectly clear to every worker who is at all class-conscious.

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## A MOTE IN THE EYE

Algeria let them down. . . . Our ministeriable "Socialist-Revolutionaries" had almost succeeded in stunning the public—and themselves—into believing all their talk about "peace without annexations", but . . . Algeria let them down. *Dyelo Naroda*,<sup>67</sup> a newspaper to which two Socialist-Revolutionary ministers, Kerensky and Chernov, contribute, was . . . incautious enough to invite the views of three Allied cabinet ministers (belonging to the same near-socialist camp) on Algeria. How terribly careless this was on the part of the newspaper of the Kerenskys and Chernovs will be seen from the following.

The three Allied ministers—Henderson, Thomas and Vandervelde of Britain, France and Belgium, stated that they did not want "annexation", but only "liberation of territories". The paper of the Kerenskys and Chernovs described this—quite rightly—as a "sleight of hand" on the part of the "bourgeois-tamed socialists", and poured out on them the following angry and sarcastic tirade:

"True, they [the three ministers] demand the liberation of territories' only 'in conformity with the will of the population'. Very well! But in that case we ought to demand that they, and we, be consistent and recognise the 'liberation' of Ireland and Finland on the one hand, and Algeria or Siam on the other. It would be very interesting to hear the opinion of, say, the socialist Albert Thomas on 'self-determination' for Algeria."

Indeed, "it would be very interesting to hear the opinion" also of Kerensky, Tsereteli, Chernov and Skobelev on "self-determination" for Armenia, Galicia, Ukraine, and Turkestan.

Don't you see, you Narodnik and Menshevik members of the Russian Government, that by citing the example of Ireland and Algeria you have exposed the whole lie and falsi-

ty of your own position and behaviour. You have shown that "annexation" *cannot* be interpreted merely as the seizure of territory *in this war*. In other words, you have refuted yourselves and *Izvestia* of the Petrograd Soviet<sup>68</sup> which only the other day declared with proud ignorance that the term annexation could be applied only to territories seized in the present war. But who does not know that Ireland and Algeria were annexed decades and centuries before the outbreak of this war?

Careless, very careless of *Dyelo Naroda*! It has exposed its utter confusion of ideas, and that of the Mensheviks and *Izvestia*, on such a key issue as annexations.

Nor is that all. You question Henderson about Ireland, and Albert Thomas about Algeria; you contrast the views on annexation of the "French *bourgeoisie* now in power" with the views of the French *people*; you call Henderson and Albert Thomas "bourgeois-tamed socialists"—but what about yourselves?

What are you, Kerensky, Tsereteli, Chernov, Skobelev, if not "bourgeois-tamed socialists"? Did *you* raise the question of the *Russian* Ireland and the *Russian* Algeria, i.e., of Turkestan, Armenia, Ukraine, Finland, etc., before the government of the "Russian *bourgeoisie* now in power"? When did you raise this question? Why don't you tell the Russian "people" about it? Why don't you qualify as "sleight of hand" the *Russian* Narodniks' and Mensheviks' blether about "peace without annexations" in the Soviet, in the government and before the people, *without raising*, clearly and unambiguously, the question of *all Russian* annexations of the same type as Ireland and Algeria?

The Russian ministeriable Narodniks and Mensheviks are in a hopeless muddle; every passing day adds to their self-exposure.

Their "final" stock argument is that we are having a revolution. But that argument is false from beginning to end. For our revolution *so far* has only brought the *bourgeoisie* to power, as in France and Britain, with a "harmless minority" of "bourgeois-tamed socialists", as in France and Britain. What our revolution will produce tomorrow—whether a return to the monarchy, the strengthening of the bourgeoisie, or the transfer of power to more advanced classes—neither we nor anyone else knows. Consequently,



the plea of "revolution" in general is a gross deception of the people and of oneself.

The annexation issue is a good touchstone for the Narodniks and Mensheviks, who are entangled in a web of lies. They are *just as* muddled as Plekhanov, Henderson, Scheidemann and Co.; they are distinguishable from each other *only in words*, for as far as *deeds* are concerned they are all alike—dead to socialism.

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## THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

No idea could be more erroneous or harmful than to separate foreign from home policy. The monstrous falsity of this separation becomes even more monstrous in wartime. Yet the bourgeoisie are doing everything possible and impossible to suggest and promote this idea. Popular ignorance of foreign policy is incomparably greater than of home policy. The "secrecy" of diplomatic relations is sacredly observed in the freest of capitalist countries, in the most democratic republics.

Popular deception has become a real art in foreign "affairs", and our revolution suffers very badly from this deception. The poison of deception is spread far and wide by the millions of copies of bourgeois newspapers.

You must side with one of the two immensely wealthy and immensely powerful groups of imperialist predators—that is how capitalist reality poses the basic issue of present-day foreign policy. That is how this issue is posed by the capitalist class. And that, it goes without saying, is how it is posed by the broad mass of the petty bourgeoisie who have retained their old, capitalist views and prejudices.

Those whose thinking does not go beyond capitalist relations cannot understand why the workers, if they are politically conscious, cannot side with *either* group of imperialist plunderers. Conversely, the worker cannot understand why socialists who remain true to the fraternal alliance of the workers of the world against the capitalists of the world are accused of being inclined towards a separate peace treaty with the Germans, or of virtually serving such a peace treaty. Under no circumstances can these socialists (and hence the Bolsheviks) agree to a separate peace treaty

between the capitalists. The basis for the foreign policy of the politically-conscious proletariat is no separate peace treaty with the German capitalists and no alliance with the Anglo-French capitalists.

By rising up in arms against that programme because they fear a break with "Britain and France", our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are virtually carrying out a capitalist foreign policy programme, while embellishing it with florid and innocent phrases about "revision of treaties", declarations in support of "peace without annexations", etc. All these pious wishes are doomed to remain hollow phrases, for *capitalist* reality puts the issue bluntly: either submit to the imperialist of one of the two groups, or wage a revolutionary struggle against all imperialists.

Have we any allies for this struggle? Yes. The oppressed classes of Europe, primarily the proletariat. The peoples oppressed by imperialism, primarily our neighbours in Asia.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who call themselves "revolutionary democrats", are in fact pursuing a counter-revolutionary and anti-democratic foreign policy. Were they revolutionaries, they would advise the workers and peasants of Russia to march at the head of all peoples oppressed by imperialism and of all the oppressed classes.

"But in that event the capitalists of all other countries would rally against Russia," the frightened philistines object. That is not impossible. No "*revolutionary*" democrat has the right to renounce revolutionary war in advance. But the practical likelihood of such a war is not very great. The British and German imperialists will not be able to "come to terms" against revolutionary Russia.

The Russian revolution, which as early as 1905 led to revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, would have placed the German and British imperialists in a very difficult position if it had begun to establish a truly revolutionary alliance of the workers and peasants of the colonies and semi-colonies against the despots, against the khans, for expulsion of the Germans from Turkey, the British from Turkey, Persia, India, Egypt, etc.

Social-chauvinists, both French and Russian, like to refer to 1793. By this spectacular reference they try to cover up their betrayal of the revolution. But people here refuse to think that the *truly* "revolutionary" democrats in Russia

could and should act *in the spirit* of 1793 towards the oppressed and backward nations.

The foreign policy of the capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie is "alliance" with the imperialists, that is, disgraceful dependence on them. The foreign policy of the proletariat is alliance with the revolutionaries of the advanced countries and with all the oppressed nations against all and any imperialists.

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## **Part Three**

**1917-1923**



**REPORT ON PEACE  
TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS'  
DEPUTIES**

**October 26 (November 8), 1917**

The question of peace is a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

**DECREE ON PEACE**

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final

ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—it is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will

proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of land-owners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian land-owners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England,<sup>69</sup> a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law<sup>70</sup> in Germany and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisa-



tions in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

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The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however,

are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14, we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy,<sup>71</sup> which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged applause.*)

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## From REPORT ON THE PARTY PROGRAMME TO THE EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

March 19

I have to say the same thing about the *national question*. Here too the wish is father to the thought with Comrade Bukharin. He says that we must not recognise the right of nations to self-determination. A nation means the bourgeoisie together with the proletariat. And are we, the proletarians, to recognise the right to self-determination of the despised bourgeoisie? That is absolutely incompatible! Pardon me, it is compatible with what actually exists. If you eliminate this, the result will be sheer fantasy. You refer to the process of differentiation which is taking place within the nations, the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. But let us see how this differentiation will proceed.

Take, for instance, Germany, the model of an advanced capitalist country whose organisation of capitalism, finance capitalism, was superior to that of America. She was inferior in many other respects, in technical development and production and in the political sphere, but in respect of the organisation of finance capitalism, in respect of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, Germany was superior to America. She is a model, it would seem. But what is taking place there? Has the German proletariat become differentiated from the bourgeoisie? No! It was reported that the majority of the workers are opposed to Scheidemann in only a few of the large towns. But how did this come about? It was owing to the alliance between the Spartacists and the thrice-accursed German Menshevik-Independents,<sup>72</sup> who make a muddle of everything and want to wed the system of workers' councils to a Constituent Assembly! And this is what is taking place

in that very Germany! And she, mark you, is an advanced country.

Comrade Bukharin says, "Why do we need the right of nations to self-determination?" I must repeat what I said opposing him in the summer of 1917, when he proposed to delete the minimum programme and to leave only the maximum programme.<sup>73</sup> I then retorted, "Don't halloo until you're out of the wood." When we have conquered power, and even then only after waiting a while, we shall do this. We have conquered power, we have waited a while, and now I am willing to do it. We have gone directly into socialist construction, we have beaten off the first assault that threatened us—now it will be in place. The same applies to the right of nations to self-determination. "I want to recognise only the right of the working classes to self-determination," says Comrade Bukharin. That is to say, you want to recognise something that has not been achieved in a single country except Russia. That is ridiculous.

Look at Finland; she is a democratic country, more developed, more cultured than we are. In Finland a process of separation, of the differentiation of the proletariat is taking a specific course, far more painful than was the case with us. The Finns have experienced the dictatorship of Germany; they are now experiencing the dictatorship of the Allied powers. But thanks to the fact that we have recognised the right of nations to self-determination, the process of differentiation has been facilitated there. I very well recall the scene when, at Smolny, I handed the act to Svinhufvud<sup>74</sup>—which in Russian means "pighead"—the representative of the Finnish bourgeoisie, who played the part of a hangman. He amiably shook my hand, we exchanged compliments. How unpleasant that was! But it had to be done, because at that time the bourgeoisie were deceiving the people, were deceiving the working people by alleging that the Muscovites, the chauvinists, the Great Russians, wanted to crush the Finns. It had to be done.

Yesterday, was it not necessary to do the same thing in relation to the Bashkirian Republic? When Comrade Bukharin said, "We can recognise this right in some cases", I even wrote down that he had included in the list the Hotentots, the Bushmen and the Indians. Hearing this enumeration, I thought, how is it that Comrade Bukharin has

forgotten a small trifle, the Bashkirs? There are no Bushmen in Russia, nor have I heard that the Hottentots have laid claim to an autonomous republic, but we have Bashkirs, Kirghiz and a number of other peoples, and to these we cannot deny recognition. We cannot deny it to a single one of the peoples living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire. Let us even assume that the Bashkirs have overthrown the exploiters and we have helped them to do so. This is possible only when a revolution has fully matured, and it must be done cautiously, so as not to retard by one's interference that very process of the differentiation of the proletariat which we ought to expedite. What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? Here, in Russia, the population, having had a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place.

Comrade Bukharin does not want to wait. He is possessed by impatience: "Why should we? When we have ourselves overthrown the bourgeoisie, proclaimed Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, why should we act thus?" This has the effect of a rousing appeal, it contains an indication of our path, but if we were to proclaim only this in our programme, it would not be a programme, but a proclamation. We may proclaim Soviet power, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and express the contempt for the bourgeoisie they deserve a thousand times over, but in the programme we must write just what actually exists with the greatest precision. And then our programme will be incontrovertible.

We hold a strictly class standpoint. What we are writing in the programme is a recognition of what has actually taken place since the time we wrote of the self-determination of nations in general. At that time there were still no proletarian republics. It was when they appeared, and



only as they appeared, that we were able to write what is written here: "A federation of state organised after the *Soviet type*." The Soviet type is not yet Soviets as they exist in Russia, but the Soviet type is becoming international. And this is all we can say. To go farther, one step farther, one hair's breadth farther, would be wrong, and therefore unsuitable for a programme.

We say that account must be taken of the stage reached by the given nation on its way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy, and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. That is absolutely correct. All nations have the right to self-determination—there is no need to speak specially of the Hottentots and the Bushmen. The vast majority, most likely nine-tenths of the population of the earth, perhaps 95 per cent, come under this description, since all countries are on the way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. This is an absolutely inevitable course. More cannot be said, because it would be wrong, because it would not be what actually exists. To reject the self-determination of nations and insert the self-determination of the working people would be absolutely wrong, because this manner of settling the question does not reckon with the difficulties, with the zigzag course taken by differentiation within nations. In Germany it is not proceeding in the same way as in our country—in certain respects more rapidly, and in other respects in a slower and more sanguinary way. Not a single party in our country accepted so monstrous an idea as a combination of workers' councils and a Constituent Assembly. And yet we have to live side by side with these nations. Now Scheidemann's party is already saying that we want to conquer Germany. That is of course ridiculous, nonsensical. But the bourgeoisie have their own interests and their own press, which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; Wilson, too, is supporting this in his own interests. The Bolsheviks, they declare, have a large army, and they want, by means of conquest, to implant their Bolshevism in Germany. The best people in Germany—the Spartacists—told us that the German workers are being incited against the Communists; look, they are told, how bad things are with the Bolsheviks! And we cannot say that things with us are very good.

And so our enemies in Germany influence the people with the argument that the proletarian revolution in Germany would result in the same disorders as in Russia. Our disorders are a protracted illness. We are contending with desperate difficulties in creating the proletarian dictatorship in our country. As long as the bourgeoisie, or the petty bourgeoisie, or even part of the German workers, are under the influence of this bugbear—"the Bolsheviks want to establish their system by force"—so long will the formula "the self-determination of the working people" not help matters. We must arrange things so that the German traitor-socialists will not be able to say that the Bolsheviks are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be brought into Berlin on Red Army bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied.

Our programme must not speak of the self-determination of the working people, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are at different stages on the road from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our programme is absolutely correct. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must obtain the right to self-determination, and that will make the self-determination of the working people easier. In Finland the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie is remarkably clear, forceful and deep. At any rate, things will not proceed there as they do in our country. If we were to declare that we do not recognise any Finnish nation, but only the working people, that would be sheer nonsense. We cannot refuse to recognise what actually exists; it will itself compel us to recognise it. The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation. Self-determination of the proletariat is proceeding among the Poles. Here are the latest figures on the composition of the Warsaw Soviet of Workers' Deputies: Polish traitor-socialists—333, Communists—297. This shows that, according to our revolutionary calen-

dar, October in that country is not very far off. It is somewhere about August or September 1917. But, firstly, no decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar; and even if it were issued, it would not be observed. And, secondly, the situation at present is such that the majority of the Polish workers, who are more advanced than ours and more cultured, share the standpoint of social-defencism, social-patriotism. We must wait. We cannot speak here of the self-determination of the working people. We must carry on propaganda in behalf of this differentiation. This is what we are doing, but there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that we must recognise the self-determination of the Polish nation now. That is clear. The Polish proletarian movement is taking the same course as ours, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in the same way as in Russia. And there the workers are being intimidated by statements to the effect that the Muscovites, the Great Russians, who have always oppressed the Poles, want to carry their Great-Russian chauvinism into Poland in the guise of communism. Communism cannot be imposed by force. When I said to one of the best comrades among the Polish Communists, "You will do it in a different way," he replied, "No, we shall do the same thing, but better than you." To such an argument I had absolutely no objections. They must be given the opportunity of fulfilling a modest wish—to create a better Soviet power than ours. We cannot help reckoning with the fact that things there are proceeding in rather a peculiar way, and we cannot say: "Down with the right of nations to self-determination! We grant the right of self-determination only to the working people." This self-determination proceeds in a very complex and difficult way. It exists nowhere but in Russia, and, while foreseeing every stage of development in other countries, we must decree nothing from Moscow. That is why this proposal is unacceptable in principle.

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March 21 and 22, 1919

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 29, pp. 170-75

## LETTER TO EMIR AMANULLAH KHAN OF AFGHANISTAN<sup>75</sup>

In reply to the first message to be issued by Afghanistan as a free and independent nation, conveying greetings to the Russian people and announcing Your Majesty's accession to the throne, we hasten to convey the greetings of the Workers' and Peasants' Government and the entire people of Russia to the independent Afghan people, who are heroically upholding their freedom against foreign oppression. I wish to congratulate Your Majesty on your accession to the throne on February 21, 1919.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government has, in fact, held out genuine freedom and equality to all the nations of the Russian Republic and has, as you say, adopted the internationalist principle, proclaiming the unity of all working people in face of the exploiters.

May the desire of the Afghan people to follow the Russian example be the best guarantee of the strength and independence of the Afghan state.

We welcome Your Majesty's intention to build close relations with the Russian people, and request you to appoint an official representative in Moscow. For our part, we are prepared to dispatch a representative of the Workers' and Peasants' Government to Kabul and request that Your Majesty order the authorities concerned to facilitate his journey. Establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between the two great nations will present broad opportunities for mutual assistance against any encroachment by foreign predatory forces on their freedom and property.

I take great pleasure in addressing this first message of greetings to the people of Afghanistan and request Your Majesty to accept the amicable salutations of friends of your people.

Moscow, May 27, 1919

*Lenin*  
Chairman, Council of the People's  
Commissars, RSFSR

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*Tashkentskogo Soveta*  
*Rabochikh, Soldatskikh i*  
*Dekkhanskikh Deputatov*,  
No. 121

*Collected Works*,  
5th Russ. ed.,  
Vol. 50, p. 386



**From ANSWERS  
TO AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST'S QUESTIONS**

2. The activities of our Soviet Republic in Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside Russia are the same as our activities among the numerous Moslems and other non-Russian people inside Russia. We have made it possible, for instance, for the Bashkirian people to establish an autonomous republic within Russia, we are doing everything possible to help the independent, free development of every nationality, the growth and dissemination of literature in the native language of each of them, we are translating and propagandising our Soviet Constitution which has the misfortune to be more pleasing to more than a thousand million inhabitants of the earth who belong to colonial, dependent, oppressed, underprivileged nations than the constitutions of the West-European and American bourgeois-"democratic" states that perpetuate private property in land and capital, i.e., strengthen the oppression of the working people of their own countries and of hundreds of millions of people in the colonies of Asia, Africa, etc., by a small number of "civilised" capitalists.

*Pravda* No. 162,  
July 25, 1919

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 29, p. 516

## TO THE COMMUNISTS OF TURKESTAN

Comrades, permit me to address you not as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Defence, but as a member of the Party.

It is no exaggeration to say that the establishment of proper relations with the peoples of Turkestan is now of immense, epochal importance for the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

The attitude of the Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Republic to the weak and hitherto oppressed nations is of very practical significance for the whole of Asia and for all the colonies of the world, for thousands and millions of people.

I earnestly urge you to devote the closest attention to this question, to exert every effort to set an effective example of comradely relations with the peoples of Turkestan, to demonstrate to them by your actions that we are sincere in our desire to wipe out all traces of Great-Russian imperialism and wage an implacable struggle against world imperialism, headed by British imperialism. You should show the greatest confidence in our Turkestan Commission<sup>76</sup> and adhere strictly to its directives, which have been framed precisely in this spirit by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

I would very much appreciate a reply to this letter indicating your attitude.

With communist greetings,

V. Ulyanov (Lenin)

*Two Years of the First  
Century, Proletarian Era,  
Turkestansky Kommunist,  
Izvestia TsIK Sovetov  
Turkestarskoi Respubliki and  
Krasny Front (jubilee  
edition), November 7-10,  
1919*

*Collected Works,  
Vol. 30, p. 138*

## ADDRESS TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST ORGANISATIONS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST

November 22, 1919

Comrades, I am very glad of the opportunity to greet this Congress of Communist comrades representing Moslem organisations of the East, and to say a few words about the situation now obtaining in Russia and throughout the world. The subject of my address is current affairs, and it seems to me that the most essential aspects of this question at present are the attitude of the peoples of the East to imperialism, and the revolutionary movement among those peoples. It is self-evident that this revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism. Owing to a number of circumstances, among them the backwardness of Russia and her vast area, and the fact that she constitutes a frontier between Europe and Asia, between the West and the East, we had to bear the whole brunt—and we regard that as a great honour—of being the pioneers of the world struggle against imperialism. Consequently, the whole course of development in the immediate future presages a still broader and more strenuous struggle against international imperialism, and will inevitably be linked with the struggle of the Soviet Republic against the forces of united imperialism—of Germany, France, Britain and the U.S.A.

As regards the military aspect of the matter, you know how favourable our situation now is on all the fronts. I shall not dwell in detail on this question; I shall only say that the Civil War which was forced upon us by interna-

tional imperialism has in two years inflicted incalculable hardship upon the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and imposed upon the peasants and workers a burden so intolerable that it often seemed they would not be able to endure it. But at the same time, because of its brute violence, because of the ruthlessly brutal onslaught of our so-called allies, turned wild beasts, who robbed us even before the socialist revolution, this war has performed a miracle and turned people weary of fighting and seemingly incapable of bearing another war into warriors who have not only withstood the war for two years but are bringing it to a victorious end. The victories we are now gaining over Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin signify the advent of a new phase in the history of the struggle of world imperialism against the countries and nations which have risen up to fight for their emancipation. In this respect, the two years of our Civil War have fully confirmed what has long been known to history—that the character of a war and its success depend chiefly upon the internal regime of the country that goes to war, that war is a reflection of the internal policy conducted by the given country before the war. All this is inevitably reflected in the prosecution of a war.

Which class waged the war, and is continuing to wage it, is a very important question. Only due to our Civil War being waged by workers and peasants who have emancipated themselves, and to its being a continuation of the political struggle for the emancipation of the working people from the capitalists of their own country and of the whole world—only thanks to this were people to be found in such a backward country as Russia, worn out as she was by four years of imperialist war, who were strong-willed enough to carry on that war during two years of incredible and unparalleled hardship and difficulty.

This was very strikingly illustrated in the history of the Civil War in the case of Kolchak. Kolchak was an enemy who had the assistance of all the world's strongest powers; he had a railway which was protected by some hundred thousand foreign troops, including the finest troops of the world imperialists, such as the Japanese, for example, who had been trained for the imperialist war, but took practically no part in it and therefore suffered little; Kol-

chak had the backing of the Siberian peasants, who were the most prosperous and had never known serfdom, and therefore, naturally, were farthest of all from communism. It seemed that Kolchak was an invincible force, because his troops were the advance guard of international imperialism. To this day, Japanese and Czechoslovak troops and the troops of a number of other imperialist nations are operating in Siberia. Nevertheless, the more than a year's experience of Kolchak's rule over Siberia and her vast natural resources, which was at first supported by the socialist parties of the Second International, by the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who set up the Constituent Assembly Committee<sup>77</sup> front, and which therefore, under these conditions, from the standpoint of the man in the street and of the ordinary course of history, appeared to be firm and invincible—that experience actually revealed the following. The farther Kolchak advanced into the heart of Russia, the more he wore himself out, and in the end we have witnessed Soviet Russia's complete triumph over Kolchak. Here we undoubtedly have practical proof that the united forces of workers and peasants who have been emancipated from the capitalist yoke can perform real miracles. Here we have practical proof that when a revolutionary war really does attract and interest the working and oppressed people, when it makes them conscious that they are fighting the exploiters—such a revolutionary war engenders the strength and ability to perform miracles.

I think that what the Red Army has accomplished, its struggle, and the history of its victory, will be of colossal, epochal significance for all the peoples of the East. It will show them that, weak as they may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who in the struggle employ all the marvels of technology and of the military art—nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of working and exploited people, harbours such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable, from the standpoint not only of the prospects of the international revolution, but also of the direct military experience acquired in Asia, in Siberia, the experience of the Soviet



Republic, which has suffered the armed invasion of all the powerful imperialist countries.

Furthermore, the experience of the Civil War in Russia has shown us and the Communists of all countries that, in the crucible of civil war, the development of revolutionary enthusiasm is accompanied by a powerful inner cohesion. War tests all the economic and organisational forces of a nation. In the final analysis, infinitely hard as the war has been for the workers and peasants, who are suffering famine and cold, it may be said on the basis of these two years' experience that we are winning and will continue to win, because we have a hinterland, and a strong one, because, despite famine and cold, the peasants and workers stand together, have grown strong, and answer every heavy blow with a greater cohesion of their forces and increased economic might. And it is this alone that has made possible the victories over Kolchak, Yudenich and their allies, the strongest powers in the world. The past two years have shown on the one hand, that a revolutionary war can be developed, and, on the other, that the Soviet system is growing stronger under the heavy blows of the foreign invasion, the aim of which is to destroy quickly the revolutionary centre, the republic of workers and peasants who have dared to declare war on international imperialism. But instead of destroying the workers and peasants of Russia, these heavy blows have served to harden them.

That is the chief lesson, the chief content of the present period. We are on the eve of decisive victories over Denikin, the last enemy left on our soil. We feel strong and may reiterate a thousand times over that we are not mistaken when we say that internally the Republic has become consolidated, and that we shall emerge from the war against Denikin very much stronger and better prepared for the task of erecting the socialist edifice—to which we have been able to devote all too little time and energy during the Civil War, but to which, now that we are setting foot on a free road, we shall undoubtedly be able to devote ourselves entirely.

In Western Europe we see the decay of imperialism. You know that a year ago it seemed even to the German socialists, and to the vast majority of socialists—who did

not understand the state of affairs—that what was in progress was a struggle of two world imperialist groups, and they believed that this struggle constituted the whole of history, that there was no force capable of producing anything else. It seemed to them that even socialists had no alternative but to join sides with one of the groups of powerful world predators. That is how it seemed at the close of October 1918. But we find that in the year that has since elapsed world history has witnessed unparalleled events, profound and far-reaching events, and these have opened the eyes of many socialists who during the imperialist war were patriots and justified their conduct on the plea that they were faced with an enemy; they justified their alliance with the British and French imperialists on the grounds that these were supposedly bringing delivery from German imperialism. See how many illusions were shattered by that war! We are witnessing the decay of German imperialism, a decay which has led not only to a republican, but even to a socialist revolution. You know that in Germany today the class struggle has become still more acute and that civil war is drawing nearer and nearer—a war of the German proletariat against the German imperialists, who have adopted republican colours, but who remain imperialists.

Everyone knows that the social revolution is maturing in Western Europe by leaps and bounds, and that the same thing is happening in America and in Britain, the countries ostensibly representing culture and civilisation, victors over the Huns, the German imperialists. Yet when it came to the Treaty of Versailles,<sup>78</sup> everyone saw that it was a hundred times more rapacious than the Treaty of Brest<sup>79</sup> which the German robbers forced upon us, and that it was the heaviest blow the capitalists and imperialists of those luckless victor countries could possibly have struck at themselves. The Treaty of Versailles opened the eyes of the people of the victor nations, and showed that in the case of Britain and France, even though they are democratic states, we have before us not representatives of culture and civilisation, but countries ruled by imperialist predators. The internal struggle among these predators is developing so swiftly that we may rejoice in the knowledge that the Treaty of Versailles is only a seeming

victory for the jubilant imperialists, and that in reality it signifies the bankruptcy of the entire imperialist world and the resolute abandonment by the working people of those socialists who during the war allied themselves with the representatives of decaying imperialism and defended one of the groups of belligerent predators. The eyes of the working people have been opened because the Treaty of Versailles was a rapacious peace and showed that France and Britain had actually fought Germany in order to strengthen their rule over the colonies and to enhance their imperialist might. That internal struggle grows broader as time goes on. Today I saw a wireless message from London dated November 21, in which American journalists—men who cannot be suspected of sympathising with revolutionaries—say that in France an unprecedented outburst of hatred towards the Americans is to be observed, because the Americans refuse to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

Britain and France are victors, but they are up to their ears in debt to America, who has decided that the French and the British may consider themselves victors as much as they like, but that she is going to skim the cream and exact usurious interest for her assistance during the war; and the guarantee of this is to be the American Navy which is now being built and is overtaking the British Navy in size. And the crudeness of the Americans' rapacious imperialism may be seen from the fact that American agents are buying white slaves, women and girls, and shipping them to America for the development of prostitution. Just think, free, cultured America supplying white slaves for brothels! Conflicts with American agents are occurring in Poland and Belgium. That is a tiny illustration of what is taking place on a vast scale in every little country which received assistance from the Entente. Take Poland, for instance. You find American agents and profiteers going there and buying up all the wealth of Poland, who boasts that she is now an independent power. Poland is being bought up by American agents. There is not a factory or branch of industry which is not in the pockets of the Americans. The Americans have become so brazen that they are beginning to enslave that "great and free victor", France, who was formerly a country of usurers, but is now

deep in debt to America, because she has lost her economic strength, and has not enough grain or coal of her own and cannot develop her material resources on a large scale, while America insists that the tribute be paid unreservedly and in full. It is thus becoming increasingly apparent that France, Britain and other powerful countries are economically bankrupt. In the French elections the Clericals have gained the upper hand. The French people, who were deceived into devoting all their strength supposedly to the defence of freedom and democracy against Germany, have now been rewarded with an interminable debt, with the sneers of the rapacious American imperialists and, on top of it, with a Clerical majority consisting of representatives of the most savage reaction.

The situation all over the world has become immeasurably more complicated. Our victory over Kolchak and Yudenich, those lackeys of international capital, is a big one; but far bigger, though not so evident, is the victory we are gaining on an international scale. That victory consists in the internal decay of imperialism, which is unable to send its troops against us. The Entente tried it, but to no purpose, because its troops become demoralised when they contact our troops and acquaint themselves with our Russian Soviet Constitution, translated into their languages. Despite the influence of the leaders of putrid socialism, our Constitution will always win the sympathy of the working people. The word "Soviet" is now understood by everybody, and the Soviet Constitution has been translated into all languages and is known to every worker. He knows that it is the constitution of working people, the political system of working people who are calling for victory over international capital, that it is a triumph we have achieved over the international imperialists. This victory of ours has had its repercussions in all imperialist countries, since we have deprived them of their own troops, won them over, deprived them of the possibility of using those troops against Soviet Russia.

They tried to wage war with the troops of other countries—Finland, Poland, and Latvia—but nothing came of it. British Minister Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons several weeks ago, boasted—and it was cabled all over the world—that a campaign of fourteen nations



against Soviet Russia had been organised, and that this would result in victory over Russia by the New Year. And it is true that many nations participated in it—Finland, the Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, as well as the Czechoslovaks, the Japanese, the French, the British, and the Germans. But we know what came of it! We know that the Estonians left Yudenich's forces in the lurch; and now a fierce controversy is going on in the press because the Estonians do not want to help him, while Finland, much as her bourgeoisie wanted it, has not assisted Yudenich either. Thus the second attempt to attack us has likewise failed. The first stage was the dispatch by the Entente of its own troops, equipped according to all the rules of military technique, so that it seemed they would defeat the Soviet Republic. They have already withdrawn from the Caucasus, Archangel and the Crimea; they still remain in Murmansk, as the Czechoslovaks do in Siberia, but only as isolated groups. The first attempt of the Entente to defeat us with its own forces ended in victory for us. The second attempt consisted in launching against us nations which are our neighbours, and which are entirely dependent financially on the Entente, and in trying to force them to crush us, as a nest of socialism. But that attempt, too, ended in failure: it turned out that not one of these little countries is capable of waging such a war. What is more, hatred of the Entente has taken firm root in every little country. If Finland did not set out to capture Petrograd when Yudenich had already captured Krasnoye Selo, it was because she hesitated, realising that she could live independently side by side with Soviet Russia, but could not live in peace with the Entente. All little nations have felt that. It is felt in Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Poland, where chauvinism is rampant, but where there is hatred of the Entente, which is expanding its exploitation in those countries. And now, accurately assessing the course of developments, we may say without exaggeration that not only the first, but also the second stage of the international war against the Soviet Republic has failed. All that remains for us to do now is to defeat Denikin's forces, and they are already half-defeated.

Such is the present Russian and international situation, which I have summarised briefly in my address. Permit me, in conclusion, to say something about the situation



that is developing in respect of the nationalities of the East. You are representatives of the communist organisations and Communist Parties of various Eastern peoples. I must say that the Russian Bolsheviks have succeeded in forcing a breach in the old imperialism, in undertaking the exceedingly difficult, but also exceedingly noble task of blazing new paths of revolution, whereas you, the representatives of the working people of the East, have before you a task that is still greater and newer. It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism. Characterising the approach of the world social revolution in the Party Programme we adopted last March, we said that the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. That is confirmed by the course of the revolution, and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on. It will be the same in the East.

We know that in the East the masses will rise as independent participants, as builders of a new life, because hundreds of millions of the people belong to dependent, underprivileged nations, which until now have been objects of international imperialist policy, and have only existed as material to fertilise capitalist culture and civilisation. And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder—handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to

exploit the majority of the population of the globe. That majority, which up till then had been completely outside the orbit of historical progress, because it could not constitute an independent revolutionary force, ceased, as we know, to play such a passive role at the beginning of the twentieth century. We know that 1905 was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, and that a revolutionary movement developed in India. The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarise themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, the need for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution—which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort—that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement you will be called upon to play a big part and to merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people for the first time begin to act independently and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism.

Most of the Eastern peoples are in a worse position than the most backward country in Europe—Russia. But in our struggle against feudal survivals and capitalism, we succeeded in uniting the peasants and workers of Russia; and it was because the peasants and workers united against

capitalism and feudalism that our victory was so easy. Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important, because the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people—not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression. The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

In this respect we are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism. That is a difficult and specific task, but a very thankful one, because masses that have taken no part in the struggle up to now are being drawn into it, and also because the organisation of communist cells in the East gives you an opportunity to maintain the closest contact with the Third International. You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries. And that latter task you will, I hope, perform with success. Thanks to the communist organisations in the East, of which you here are the representatives, you have contact with the advanced revolutionary proletariat. Your task is to continue to ensure that communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand.

It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the

British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations. We must realise that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone. The task is to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it through your own independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent. You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification. At the same time, you must find your way to the working and exploited masses of every country and tell them in a language they understand that their only hope of emancipation lies in the victory of the international revolution, and that the international proletariat is the only ally of all the hundreds of millions of the working and exploited peoples of the East.

Such is the immense task which confronts you, and which, thanks to the era of revolution and the growth of the revolutionary movement—of that there can be no doubt—will, by the joint efforts of the communist organisations of the East, be successfully accomplished and crowned by complete victory over international imperialism.

*Bulletin of the C.C.,  
R.C.P.(B.) No. 9,  
December 20, 1919*

*Collected Works,  
Vol. 30, pp. 151-62*

**From REPORT  
ON THE WORK OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL  
OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS DELIVERED AT THE  
FIRST SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, SEVENTH CONVOCATION**

**February 2, 1920**

We must immediately appeal to the Polish people and explain the real state of affairs. We know full well that this method of ours has a most positive effect in tending to disrupt the ranks of our enemy. And in the end, this method will lead on to the path we need, the path on to which it has led the working population of all countries. This policy must make a definite beginning—no matter how difficult this may prove—and once a beginning is made, we shall carry it through to completion.

I must mention that we have been pursuing the same policy in respect of all other countries. We invited Georgia and Azerbaijan to conclude an agreement against Denikin. They refused, pleading non-interference in the affairs of other countries. We shall see how the workers and peasants of Georgia and Azerbaijan regard this.

This policy has been applied even more cautiously in respect of the Western nations than in dealing with the nations of Russia. It involved such countries as Latvia, Estonia, Poland and, on the other hand, a number of Eastern countries whose developmental level is the same as that of most of those colonial countries which constitute the majority of the world's population. They are kept down by Britain, who continues to hold colonial slaves under her sway. Our policy in relation to West-European countries has been very cautious—it will take some time for them to get over their own Kerensky period<sup>80</sup>—but our policy in the East must be even more cautious and patient, for here we are dealing with countries that are



much more backward, are under the oppressive influence of religious fanaticism, are imbued with greater distrust of the Russian people, and for decades and centuries were oppressed by the tsarist government's capitalist and imperialist policy, by the policy conducted towards these nations by Russia as the dominant nation.

We have granted autonomy to the Bashkir Republic. We must found an autonomous Tatar Republic. We shall continue the same policy in relation to all the Eastern peoples, and say to ourselves that we, who are faced by a huge front of imperialist powers, we, who are fighting imperialism, represent an alliance that requires close military unity, and any attempt to violate this unity we regard as absolutely impermissible, as a betrayal of the struggle against international imperialism. However, in implementing this policy we must be even more cautious. For if the European countries have to go through a Kerensky period, in the countries that are at a lower developmental level there are even greater elements of distrust, and it will require more time to influence them. We support the independence and sovereignty of these countries. We appeal to their working people. We say: unity of the military forces is imperative; any deviation from this unity is impermissible.

We are confident that, by systematically pursuing our policy of close alliance, we shall achieve greater success than before in our relations with the peoples of the East. And our success is already great. The Soviet Republic enjoys tremendous popularity among all the Eastern peoples for the same reason that made it possible for us to conclude a peace treaty with a small Western state, because they see in us an unswerving fighter against imperialism, because ours is the only republic which is waging a war against imperialism and is capable of utilising every situation without the use of force, and which is also able to gain a victory by renouncing the use of force.

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*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 30, pp. 324-26

**IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS PUT  
BY KARL WIEGAND, BERLIN CORRESPONDENT  
OF "UNIVERSAL SERVICE"**

2. What are our plans in Asia?

They are the same as in Europe: peaceful coexistence with all peoples; with the workers and peasants of all nations awakening to a new life—a life without exploiters, without landowners, without capitalists, without merchants. The imperialist war of 1914-18, the war of the capitalists of the Anglo-French (and Russian) group against the German-Austrian capitalist group for the partition of the world, has awakened Asia and has strengthened there, as everywhere else, the urge towards freedom, towards peaceful labour and against possible future wars.

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February 21, 1920

*Collected Works.*  
Vol. 30, p. 365

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**From SPEECH DELIVERED  
AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF WORKING COSSACKS**

**March 1, 1920**

After the campaign of the powers against Russia had failed, they tried another weapon. The bourgeoisie of those countries have hundreds of years of experience, and were able to replace their own unreliable weapons by others. At first they tried to use their own soldiers to crush and stifle Russia; now they are trying it with the help of the border states.

Tsarism, the landowners and the capitalists used to oppress a number of the border nations—Latvia, Finland, and so on, where they aroused hatred by centuries of oppression. “Great Russian” became a most hateful word to all these nations, which had been drenched in blood. And so the Entente, having failed in fighting the Bolsheviks with the help of its own soldiers, is now banking on the small states, hoping to strangle Soviet Russia with their help.

Churchill, who is pursuing the same sort of policy as Nicholas Romanov, wants to fight, and is fighting, without paying the slightest heed to parliament. He boasted that he would lead fourteen states against Russia—that was in 1919—and that Petrograd would be captured in September and Moscow in December. He was a little too boastful. He banked on the hatred of Russia in all these small states; but he forgot that in these small states there is a clear understanding of what Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin mean. They were once within a few weeks of complete victory. During Yudenich’s campaign, when he was quite close to Petrograd, an article appeared in *The Times*, the richest

of the British newspapers—I read this editorial myself—which implored, ordered, demanded that Finland help Yudenich—the eyes of the whole world are upon you; you will save liberty, civilisation and culture all over the world. Take the field against the Bolsheviks! This is what Britain said to Finland, and Britain has Finland completely in her pocket; it was said to Finland, who is up to her ears in debt, and who dares not utter a squeak because without Britain she has not enough grain to last her a week.

Such was the pressure brought to bear on all these small states to make them fight Bolshevism. And it failed twice. It failed because the peace policy of the Bolsheviks turned out to be a serious one, and was judged by its enemies to be more honest than the peace policy of any other country, and because a number of countries thought, “Much as we hate Great Russia, which used to suppress us, we know that it was Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin who suppressed us, and not the Bolsheviks.” The former head of the Finnish whiteguard government has not forgotten that in November 1917 he personally received a document from my hands in which we said without the slightest hesitation that we unreservedly recognised Finland’s independence.

At that time this seemed a mere gesture. It was thought that the revolt of the Finnish workers would cause it to be forgotten. But no, such things are not forgotten when they are corroborated by the whole policy of a definite party. And even the Finnish bourgeois government said, “Let’s think it over. After all, we have learned something during a hundred and fifty years of oppression by the Russian tsars. If we take the field against the Bolsheviks, we shall help to install Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin. And who are they? Don’t we know? Are they not the same breed of tsarist generals who stifled Finland, Latvia, Poland and many other nationalities? And shall we help these enemies of ours to fight the Bolsheviks? No, let us wait!”

They did not dare to refuse outright—they are dependent on the Entente. They did not help us directly; they waited, temporised, wrote Notes, sent delegations, formed commissions, sat in conference, and did so until Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin had been crushed and the Entente defeated in the second campaign too. We were the victors.

If all these small states had taken the field against us

--they were supplied with hundreds of millions of dollars and the finest guns and weapons, and had British instructors who had been through the war—if they had taken the field against us, there is not the slightest doubt that we would have been defeated. Everybody knows that very well. But they did not take the field against us, because they realised that the Bolsheviks are more honest. When the Bolsheviks say that they recognise the independence of any nation, that tsarist Russia was based on the oppression of other nations, and that the Bolsheviks never supported this policy, do not support it and never will support it, and that they will never go to war to oppress other nations—when they say that, they are believed. We know this not from the Latvian or Polish Bolsheviks, but from the bourgeoisie of Poland, Latvia, the Ukraine and so on.

Here the international significance of the Bolshevik policy had its effect. It was a test on international and not on Russian soil. It was a test by fire and sword, and not by words. It was a test in the last decisive struggle. The imperialists realised that they had no soldiers of their own, that they could strangle Bolshevism only by mustering international forces; but all international forces were beaten.

What does imperialism mean? It means that a handful of rich powers have a stranglehold on the whole world, when they know that they have the fifteen hundred million people of the world in their hands and have a stranglehold on them, and when these fifteen hundred million feel what British culture, French culture and American civilisation mean. It means freedom to rob without restraint! Today three-quarters of Finland has already been bought up by American multimillionaires. The officers who came from Britain and France to our border states to instruct their troops behaved like insolent scions of the Russian nobility in a defeated country. They all profiteered right and left. And the more the Finnish, Polish and Latvian workers starve, the more they are squeezed by a handful of British, American and French multimillionaires and their henchmen. And this is going on all over the world.

The Russian Socialist Republic alone has raised the standard of war for real emancipation; and sympathy is turning in its favour all over the world. Through the small countries, we have won the sympathy of all the nations of



the world, and they represent hundreds of millions of people. They are at present oppressed and downtrodden, they are the most backward part of the population; but the war has enlightened them. Huge masses of people were drawn into the imperialist war. Britain brought regiments from India to fight the Germans. France called millions of Africans to the colours to fight the Germans. They were formed into shock units and hurled into the most dangerous sectors, where they were mown down like grass by machine-guns. But they learned something. Under the tsar the Russian soldiers said, "If die we must, then let it be fighting the landowners"—now the Africans say, "If die we must, then let it not be to help the French predators rob the German capitalist predators, but to emancipate ourselves from the capitalists, German and French." In every country of the world, even in India, where three hundred million people are oppressed and treated as labourers by the British, minds are awakening and the revolutionary movement is growing from day to day. They all look towards one star, the star of the Soviet Republic, because they know that it made tremendous sacrifices in order to fight the imperialists, and that it has withstood the most severe trials.

This was the significance of the second card of the Entente to be beaten—victory on an international scale. It means that our peace policy is approved by the vast majority of people all over the world. It means that the number of our allies in all countries is growing—much more slowly than we would like, it is true, but growing nevertheless.

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in *Pravda* Nos. 47, 48 and 49,  
March 2, 3 and 4, 1920

## TELEGRAM TO G. K. ORJONIKIDZE

April 2, 1920

Orjonikidze,  
Revolutionary Military Council,  
Caucasian Front

Again urge you to display caution and maximum good will towards the Moslems, especially on advancing into Daghestan. Do everything to demonstrate, and in the most emphatic manner, our sympathy for the Moslems, their autonomy, independence, etc. Give me more precise and more frequent information on how things stand.

*Lenin*

First published (in abridged form)  
in 1942 in *Lenin Miscellany XXXIV*

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 30, p. 494

## TELEGRAM TO THE SOVIET SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN

Baku

The Council of People's Commissars welcomes the liberation of the toiling masses of the independent Azerbaijan Republic and expresses its firm confidence that, under the leadership of its Soviet Government, the independent Republic of Azerbaijan will, together with the R.S.F.S.R., uphold its freedom and independence against imperialism, the sworn enemy of the oppressed nations of the East.

Long live the independent Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan!

Long live the workers and peasants of Azerbaijan!

Long live the alliance of the workers and peasants of Azerbaijan and Russia!

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin)*

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

Written May 5, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 31, p. 135

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May 9, 1920

## TO THE INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY ASSOCIATION<sup>81</sup>

I am glad to hear that the principles of self-determination and the liberation of oppressed nations from exploitation by foreign and native capitalists, proclaimed by the Workers' and Peasants' Republic, have met with such a ready response among progressive Indians, who are waging a heroic fight for freedom. The working masses of Russia are following with unflagging attention the awakening of the Indian workers and peasants. The organisation and discipline of the working people and their perseverance and solidarity with the working people of the world are an earnest of ultimate success. We welcome the close alliance of Moslem and non-Moslem elements. We sincerely want to see this alliance extended to all the toilers of the East. Only when the Indian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Persian, and Turkish workers and peasants join hands and march together in the common cause of liberation—only then will decisive victory over the exploiters be ensured. Long live a free Asia!

*Pravda* No. 108 and  
*Izvestia* No. 108,  
May 20, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 31, p. 138

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT THESES  
ON THE NATIONAL AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS  
FOR THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST  
INTERNATIONAL**

In submitting for discussion by the Second Congress of the Communist International the following draft theses on the national and the colonial questions I would request all comrades, especially those who possess concrete information on any of these very complex problems, to let me have their opinions, amendments, addenda and concrete remarks *in the most concise form (no more than two or three pages)*, particularly on the following points:

Austrian experience;  
Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian experience;  
Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium;  
Ireland;  
Danish-German, Italo-French and Italo-Slav relations;  
Balkan experience;  
Eastern peoples;  
The struggle against Pan Islamism;  
Relations in the Caucasus;  
The Bashkir and Tatar Republics;  
Kirghizia;  
Turkestan, its experience;  
Negroes in America;  
Colonies;  
China-Korea-Japan.

*N. Lenin*

June 5, 1920

1) An abstract or formal posing of the problem of equality in general and national equality in particular is in the very nature of bourgeois democracy. Under the guise of the equality of the individual in general, bourgeois democ-



racy proclaims the formal or legal equality of the property-owner and the proletarian, the exploiter and the exploited, thereby grossly deceiving the oppressed classes. On the plea that all men are absolutely equal, the bourgeois is transforming the idea of equality, which is itself a reflection of relations in commodity production, into a weapon in its struggle against the abolition of classes. The real meaning of the demand for equality consists in its being a demand for the abolition of classes.

2) In conformity with its fundamental task of combating bourgeois democracy and exposing its falseness and hypocrisy, the Communist Party, as the avowed champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke, must base its policy, in the national question too, not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations, in order to counter the bourgeois-democratic lies that play down this colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced capitalist countries, a feature characteristic of the era of finance capital and imperialism.

3) The imperialist war of 1914-18 has very clearly revealed to all nations and to the oppressed classes of the whole world the falseness of bourgeois-democratic phrases, by practically demonstrating that the Treaty of Versailles of the celebrated "Western democracies" is an even more brutal and foul act of violence against weak nations than was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of the German Junkers and the Kaiser. The League of Nations and the entire post-war policy of the Entente reveal this truth with even greater clarity and distinctness. They are everywhere intensifying the revolutionary struggle both of the proletariat in the advanced countries and of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries. They are hastening the col-

lapse of the petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions that nations can live together in peace and equality under capitalism.

4) From these fundamental premises it follows that the Communist International's entire policy on the national and the colonial questions should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie. This union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.

5) The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet system's victory over world imperialism.

6) Consequently, one cannot at present confine oneself to a bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements. The form of this alliance should be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.

7) Federation is a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations. The feasibility of federation has already been demonstrated in practice both by the relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian in the past, and the Azerbaijan and Ukrainian at present), and by the relations within the R.S.F.S.R. in respect of nationalities which formerly enjoyed neither statehood

nor autonomy (e.g., the Bashkir and Tatar autonomous republics in the R.S.F.S.R., founded in 1919 and 1920 respectively).

8) In this respect, it is the task of the Communist International to further develop and also to study and test by experience these new federations, which are arising on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement. In recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unity, it is necessary to strive for ever closer federal unity, bearing in mind, first, that the Soviet republics, surrounded as they are by the imperialist powers of the whole world—which from the military standpoint are immeasurably stronger—cannot possibly continue to exist without the closest alliance; second, that a close economic alliance between the Soviet republics is necessary, otherwise the productive forces which have been ruined by imperialism cannot be restored and the well-being of the working people cannot be ensured; third, that there is a tendency towards the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism.

9) The Communist International's national policy in the sphere of relations within the state cannot be restricted to the bare, formal, purely declaratory and actually non-committal recognition of the equality of nations to which the bourgeois democrats confine themselves—both those who frankly admit being such, and those who assume the name of socialists (such as the socialists of the Second International).

In all their propaganda and agitation—both within parliament and outside it—the Communist parties must consistently expose that constant violation of the equality of nations and of the guaranteed rights of national minorities which is to be seen in all capitalist countries, despite their “democratic” constitutions. It is also necessary, first, constantly to explain that only the Soviet system is capable of ensuring genuine equality of nations, by uniting first the proletarians and then the whole mass of the working population in the struggle against the bourgeoisie; and, second, that all Communist parties should render direct

aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies.

Without the latter condition, which is particularly important, the struggle against the oppression of dependent nations and colonies, as well as recognition of their right to secede, are but a false signboard, as is evidenced by the parties of the Second International.

10) Recognition of internationalism in word, and its replacement in deed by petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, is very common, not only among the parties of the Second International, but also among those which have withdrawn from it, and often even among parties which now call themselves communist. The urgency of the struggle against this evil, against the most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, looms ever larger with the mounting exigency of the task of converting the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national dictatorship (i.e., existing in a single country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat involving at least several advanced countries, and capable of exercising a decisive influence upon world politics as a whole). Petty-bourgeois nationalism proclaims as internationalism the mere recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing more. Quite apart from the fact that this recognition is purely verbal, petty-bourgeois nationalism preserves national self-interest intact, whereas proletarian internationalism demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital.

Thus, in countries that are already fully capitalist and have workers' parties that really act as the vanguard of the proletariat, the struggle against opportunist and petty-bourgeois pacifist distortions of the concept and policy of internationalism is a primary and cardinal task.

11) With regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peas-



ant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind:

first, that all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially or financially dependent on;

second, the need for a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements in backward countries;

third, the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc.;

fourth, the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West-European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally. It is particularly necessary to exert every effort to apply the basic principles of the Soviet system in countries where pre-capitalist relations predominate—by setting up “working people’s Soviets”, etc.;

fifth, the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary

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\* In the proofs Lenin inserted a brace opposite points 2 and 3 and wrote “2 and 3 to be united”.—*Ed.*



alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form;

sixth, the need constantly to explain and expose among the broadest working masses of all countries, and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialist powers, which, under the guise of politically independent states, set up states that are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily. Under present-day international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except in a union of Soviet republics.

12) The age-old oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers has not only filled the working masses of the oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but has also aroused distrust in these nations in general, even in their proletariat. The despicable betrayal of socialism by the majority of the official leaders of this proletariat in 1914-19, when "defence of country" was used as a social-chauvinist cloak to conceal the defence of the "right" of their "own" bourgeoisie to oppress colonies and fleece financially dependent countries, was certain to enhance this perfectly legitimate distrust. On the other hand, the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small-scale agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, i.e., to national egoism and national narrow-mindedness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after imperialism and capitalism have disappeared in the advanced countries, and after the entire foundation of the backward countries' economic life has radically changed. It is therefore the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to regard with particular caution and attention the survivals of national sentiments in the countries and among nationalities which have been oppressed the longest; it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to more rapidly overcoming this distrust and these prejudices. Complete victory over

capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity.

Written June-July 1920

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July 14, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 31, pp. 144-51

**From REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL  
SITUATION AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL  
DELIVERED TO THE SECOND CONGRESS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,  
JULY 19, 1920**

Comrades, the theses on the questions of the fundamental tasks of the Communist International have been published in all languages and contain nothing that is materially new (particularly to the Russian comrades). That is because, in a considerable measure, they extend several of the main features of our revolutionary experience and the lessons of our revolutionary movement to a number of Western countries, to Western Europe. My report will therefore deal at greater length, if in brief outline, with the first part of my subject, namely, the international situation.

Imperialism's economic relations constitute the core of the entire international situation as it now exists. Throughout the twentieth century, this new, highest and final stage of capitalism has fully taken shape. Of course, you all know that the enormous dimensions that capital has reached are the most characteristic and essential feature of imperialism. The place of free competition has been taken by huge monopolies. An insignificant number of capitalists have, in some cases, been able to concentrate in their hands entire branches of industry; these have passed into the hands of combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts, not infrequently of an international nature. Thus, entire branches of industry, not only in single countries, but all over the world, have been taken over by monopolists in the field of finance, property rights, and partly of production. This has formed the basis for the unprecedented domination exercised by an insignificant number of very big banks, financial tycoons, financial magnates who have, in fact,

transformed even the freest republics into financial monarchies. Before the war this was publicly recognised by such far from revolutionary writers as, for example, Lysis in France.

This domination by a handful of capitalists achieved full development when the whole world had been partitioned, not only in the sense that the various sources of raw materials and means of production had been seized by the biggest capitalists, but also in the sense that the preliminary partition of the colonies had been completed. Some forty years ago, the population of the colonies stood at somewhat over 250,000,000, who were subordinated to six capitalist powers. Before the war of 1914, the population of the colonies was estimated at about 600,000,000, and if we add countries like Persia, Turkey, and China, which were already semi-colonies, we shall get, in round figures, a population of a thousand million people oppressed through colonial dependence by the richest, most civilised and freest countries. And you know that, apart from direct political and juridical dependence, colonial dependence presumes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence, a number of wars, which were not regarded as wars because very often they amounted to sheer massacres, when European and American imperialist troops, armed with the most up-to-date weapons of destruction, slaughtered the unarmed and defenceless inhabitants of colonial countries.

The first imperialist war of 1914-18 was the inevitable outcome of this partition of the whole world, of this domination by the capitalist monopolies, of this great power wielded by an insignificant number of very big banks—two, three, four or five in each country. This war was waged for the repartitioning of the whole world. It was waged in order to decide which of the small groups of the biggest states—the British or the German—was to obtain the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world. You know that the war settled this question in favour of the British group. And, as a result of this war, all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute. At a single stroke the war relegated about 250,000,000 of the world's inhabitants to what is equivalent to colonial status, viz., Russia, whose population can

be taken at about 130,000,000, and Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria, with a total population of not less than 120,000,000. That means 250,000,000 people living in countries, of which some, like Germany, are among the most advanced, most enlightened, most cultured, and on a level with modern technical progress. By means of the Treaty of Versailles, the war imposed such terms upon these countries that advanced peoples have been reduced to a state of colonial dependence, poverty, starvation, ruin, and loss of rights: this treaty binds them for many generations, placing them in conditions that no civilised nation has ever lived in. The following is the post-war picture of the world: at least *1,250 million* people are at once brought under the colonial yoke, exploited by a brutal capitalism, which once boasted of its love for peace, and had some right to do so some fifty years ago, when the world was not yet partitioned, the monopolies did not as yet rule, and capitalism could still develop in a relatively peaceful way, without tremendous military conflicts.

Today, after this "peaceful" period, we see a monstrous intensification of oppression, the reversion to a colonial and military oppression that is far worse than before. The Treaty of Versailles has placed Germany and the other defeated countries in a position that makes their economic existence physically impossible, deprives them of all rights, and humiliates them.

How many nations are the beneficiaries? To answer this question we must recall that the population of the United States—the only full beneficiary from the war, a country which, from a heavy debtor, has become a general creditor—is no more than 100,000,000. The population of Japan—which gained a great deal by keeping out of the European-American conflict and by seizing the enormous Asian continent—is 50,000,000. The population of Britain, which next to the above-mentioned countries gained most, is about 50,000,000. If we add the neutral countries with their very small populations, countries which were enriched by the war, we shall get, in round figures, some 250,000,000 people.

Thus you get the broad outlines of the picture of the world as it appeared after the imperialist war. In the oppressed colonies—countries which are being dismembered,



such as Persia, Turkey and China, and in countries that were defeated and have been relegated to the position of colonies—there are 1,250 million inhabitants. Not more than 250,000,000 inhabit countries that have retained their old positions, but have become economically dependent upon America, and all of which, during the war, were militarily dependent, once the war involved the whole world and did not permit a single state to remain really neutral. And, finally, we have not more than 250,000,000 inhabitants in countries whose top stratum, the capitalists alone, benefited from the partition of the world. We thus get a total of about 1,750 million comprising the entire population of the world. I would like to remind you of this picture of the world, for all the basic contradictions of capitalism, of imperialism, which are leading up to revolution, all the basic contradictions in the working-class movement that have led up to the furious struggle against the Second International, facts our chairman has referred to, are all connected with this partitioning of the world's population.

Of course, these figures give the economic picture of the world only approximately, in broad outline. And, comrades, it is natural that, with the population of the world divided in this way, exploitation by finance capital, the capitalist monopolies, has increased many times over....

Comrades, in conclusion I shall deal with one other aspect of the subject. Our comrade, the chairman, has said that our Congress merits the title of a World Congress. I think he is right, particularly because we have here quite a number of representatives of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and backward countries. This is only a small beginning, but the important thing is that a beginning has been made. At this Congress we see taking place a union between revolutionary proletarians of the capitalist, advanced countries, and the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no or hardly any proletariat, i.e., the oppressed masses of colonial, Eastern countries. It is on ourselves that the consolidation of unity depends, and I am sure we shall achieve it. World imperialism shall fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labour aristocrats, merges with the

revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history, and have been regarded merely as the object of history.

The imperialist war has helped the revolution: from the colonies, the backward countries, and the isolation they lived in, the bourgeoisie levied soldiers for this imperialist war. The British bourgeoisie impressed on the soldiers from India that it was the duty of the Indian peasants to defend Great Britain against Germany; the French bourgeoisie impressed on soldiers from the French colonies that it was their duty to defend France. They taught them the use of arms, a very useful thing, for which we might express our deep gratitude to the bourgeoisie—express our gratitude on behalf of all the Russian workers and peasants, and particularly on behalf of all the Russian Red Army. The imperialist war has drawn the dependent peoples into world history. And one of the most important tasks now confronting us is to consider how the foundation-stone of the organisation of the Soviet movement can be laid in the *non-capitalist* countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be workers' Soviets, but peasants' Soviets, or Soviets of working people.

Much work will have to be done; errors will be inevitable; many difficulties will be encountered along this road. It is the fundamental task of the Second Congress to elaborate or indicate the practical principles that will enable the work, till now carried on in an unorganised fashion among hundreds of millions of people, to be carried on in an organised, coherent and systematic fashion.

Now, a year or a little more after the First Congress of the Communist International, we have emerged victors over the Second International; it is not only among the workers of the civilised countries that the ideas of the Soviets have spread; it is not only to them that they have become known and intelligible. The workers of all lands are ridiculing the wiseacres, not a few of whom call themselves socialists and argue in a learned or almost learned manner about the Soviet "system", as the German systematists are fond of calling it, or the Soviet "idea" as the British Guild Socialists call it. Not infrequently, these arguments about the Soviet "system" or "idea" becloud the workers' eyes and their minds. However, the workers are brushing this pe-

dantic rubbish aside and are taking up the weapon provided by the Soviets. A recognition of the role and significance of the Soviets has now also spread to the lands of the East.

The groundwork has been laid for the Soviet movement all over the East, all over Asia, among all the colonial peoples.

The proposition that the exploited must rise up against the exploiters and establish their Soviets is not a very complex one. After our experience, after two and a half years of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia, and after the First Congress of the Third International, this idea is becoming accessible to hundreds of millions of people oppressed by the exploiters all over the world. We in Russia are often obliged to compromise, to bide our time, since we are weaker than the international imperialists, yet we know that we are defending the interests of this mass of a thousand and a quarter million people. For the time being, we are hampered by barriers, prejudices and ignorance which are receding into the past with every passing hour; but we are more and more becoming representatives and genuine defenders of this 70 per cent of the world's population, this mass of working and exploited people. It is with pride that we can say: at the First Congress we were in fact merely propagandists; we were only spreading the fundamental ideas among the world's proletariat; we only issued the call for struggle; we were merely asking where the people were who were capable of taking this path. Today the advanced proletariat is everywhere with us. A proletarian army exists everywhere, although sometimes it is poorly organised and needs reorganising. If our comrades in all lands help us now to organise a united army, no shortcomings will prevent us from accomplishing our task. That task is the world proletarian revolution, the creation of a world Soviet republic.

*Pravda* No. 162,  
July 24, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 31, pp. 215-18, 232-34

# **REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS TO THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

**July 26, 1920**

Comrades, I shall confine myself to a brief introduction, after which Comrade Maring, who has been secretary to our commission, will give you a detailed account of the changes we have made in the theses. He will be followed by Comrade Roy, who has formulated the supplementary theses. Our commission have unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses, as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues. I shall now make a few brief remarks.

First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The vast majority of the world's population, over a thousand million, perhaps even 1,250 million people, if we take the total population of the world as 1,750 million, in other words, about 70 per cent of the world's population, belong to the oppressed nations, which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence

or are semi-colonies, as, for example, Persia, Turkey and China, or else, conquered by some big imperialist power, have become greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature, but also those submitted by Comrade Roy. The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. Herein lies their great importance to us.

The second basic idea in our theses is that, in the present world situation following the imperialist war, reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The Communist parties, in civilised and backward countries alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point.

Third, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. This is a question that has given rise to certain differences. We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. However, the objections have



been raised that, if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movement. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries, since the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything in its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the commission, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term “national-revolutionary” for the term “bourgeois-democratic”. The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, to whom the heroes of the Second International also belong. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and socialists. The distinction I have referred to has been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our view is now formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a remark on the subject of peasants’ Soviets. The Russian Communists’ practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless,

we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries. However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent. This work has been more difficult for us than it will be for comrades in the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is engrossed in the work of state administration. It will readily be understood that peasants living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation, in their conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not as yet very considerable. However, the debate in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, demonstrated convincingly that the Communist International's theses should point out that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of Communist parties and of elements prepared to form Communist parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries. Wherever conditions permit, they should at once make attempts to set up Soviets of the working people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for our practical work. So far our joint experience in this respect has not been extensive, but more and more data will gradually accumulate. It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletar-

iat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.

There was quite a lively debate on this question in the commission, not only in connection with the theses I signed, but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here, and certain amendments to which were unanimously adopted.

The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of the Soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a pre-capitalist social system, and that the Communist parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties, not only in their own, but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprisings against British rule. True, the jingoist and chauvinist-minded labour aristocrats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism, and are a bulwark of the Second International. Here we are confronted with the greatest treachery on the part of leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question has been discussed in the Second International as well. The Basle Manifesto is quite clear on this point, too. The parties of the Second International have pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolt against the oppressor nations. This, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third International. We must proclaim this publicly for all to hear, and it is irrefutable. We shall see if any attempt is made to deny it.

All these considerations have formed the basis of our resolutions, which undoubtedly are too lengthy but will nevertheless, I am sure, prove of use and will promote the development and organisation of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the national and the colonial questions. And that is our principal task.

*Vestnik Vtorogo Kongressa  
Kommunisticheskogo  
Internatsionala* No. 6,  
August 7, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
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**REMARKS ON THE REPORT  
OF A. SULTAN-ZADE CONCERNING THE PROSPECTS  
OF A SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN THE EAST<sup>82</sup>**

- 1) Disintegration of the propertied exploiter classes
- 2) a large part of the population are *peasants* under *medieval exploitation*
- 3) *small artisans*—in industry
- 4) deduction: *adjust* both Soviet institutions and the Communist Party (its membership, special tasks) to the level of the *peasant* countries of the colonial East.

This is the crux of the matter. This needs thinking about and *seeking concrete* answers.

Written between July 24  
and 29, 1920

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 42, p. 202



**NOTES FOR THE COMMITTEE  
ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS  
OF THE SECOND CONGRESS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

The use of *medieval particularism*? Too dangerous; not Marxist.

*Modern* national movements should be distinguished from "movements" (so-called *movements*) of a medieval nature.

Written in French  
not later than July 28, 1920  
Facsimile of the MS first  
published in 1923 in the book:  
*H. Guilbeaux*  
*Wladimir Iljitsch Lenin*  
*Ein treues Bild seines Wesens,*  
*Berlin*

*Collected Works,*  
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in the Fifth Russian Edition

**DRAFT DECISION FOR THE POLITBUREAU  
OF THE C.C., R.C.P.(B.) ON THE TASKS  
OF THE R.C.P.(B.) IN LOCALITIES INHABITED  
BY EASTERN PEOPLES**

Having discussed the reports and communications made at a meeting of the Politbureau of the Central Committee with 27 delegates from the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, on 13.X.1920, the Politbureau of the C.C. has decided:

1. To extend the work of the Council of Nationalities under the People's Commissariat for Nationalities; a report on this work to be made at the next meeting of the Council of People's Commissars.

2. To institute the strictest investigations into abuses and acts of violence committed by the local Russian population towards the Eastern peoples (especially the Kalmyks, Buryat-Mongols and so on) and to punish the offenders.

3. To issue in the name of the supreme Soviet authority a manifesto confirming the principles of the R.S.F.S.R.'s national policy and establishing more effective control over its full application.

4. To consider it necessary to carry out autonomy, in forms appropriate to the concrete conditions, for those Eastern nationalities which do not possess autonomous institutions, first and foremost for the Kalmyks and Buryat-Mongols. The Commissariat for Nationalities to be charged with this task.

5. On the agrarian question, to consider it necessary to restore to the mountaineers of the Northern Caucasus the lands they were deprived of by the Great Russians, at the expense of the kulak elements of the Cossack population,

and to direct the C.P.C. immediately to prepare appropriate decrees.

6. To draw up instruction for all agents of the C.C. and the central Soviet authorities sent from Moscow to regions inhabited by Eastern peoples. The weight of emphasis in these instructions to be made on clarifying the duty of the agents to act only through the local bodies consisting of representatives of the local working population, and to consider their chief task to be to fight against the bourgeois and pseudo-communist groups among the local population while at the same time giving support to the really communist groups and elements.

Written October 13 or 14, 1920

First published in 1958  
in the journal

*Voprosi Istorii KPSS* No. 2

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Vol. 42, pp. 218-19

**From SPEECH DELIVERED  
AT A MEETING OF ACTIVISTS OF THE MOSCOW  
ORGANISATION OF THE R.C.P.(B.)**

**December 6, 1920**

We now stand, not only as representatives of the proletarians of all countries but as representatives of the oppressed peoples as well. A journal of the Communist International recently appeared under the title of *Narody Vostoka*. It carries the following slogan issued by the Communist International for the peoples of the East: "Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!" "When did the Executive Committee give orders for slogans to be modified?" one of the comrades asked. Indeed, I do not remember that it ever did. Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*, but then the *Communist Manifesto* was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct. Relations have become tense. All Germany is seething; so is all of Asia. You have read how the revolutionary movement is developing in India. In China there is a fierce hatred of the Japanese, and also of the Americans. In Germany there is such seething hatred of the Entente as can only be understood by those who have seen the hatred of the German workers for their own capitalists. As a result, they have made Russia the immediate representative of the entire mass of the oppressed population of the earth; the events are teaching the peoples to regard Russia as a centre of attraction. A Menshevik newspaper in Georgia recently wrote: "There are two forces in the world: the Entente and Soviet Russia." What are the Mensheviks? They are people who trim their sails to the wind. When we were

weak internationally, they cried, "Down with the Bolsheviks!" When we began to grow stronger, they cried, "We are neutral!" Now that we have beaten off the enemies, they say, "Yes, there are two forces."

Newspaper report published  
in *Krasnaya Gazeta* No. 275,  
December 7, 1920

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first time in 1923 in  
N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov),  
*Works*, Vol. XVII



**From REPORT OF THE ALL-RUSSIA C.E.C.  
AND THE C.P.C. ON FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY  
TO THE EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS**

**December 22, 1920**

I must also say, comrades, that during this year our policy in the East has been very successful. We must welcome the formation and consolidation of the Soviet Republics of Bukhara, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which have not only recovered their complete independence, but have placed the power of government in the hands of the workers and peasants. These republics are proof and corroboration of the fact that the ideas and principles of Soviet government are understood and immediately applicable, not only in the industrially developed countries, not only in those which have a social basis like the proletariat, but also in those which have the peasantry as their basis. The idea of peasants' Soviets has triumphed. The peasants' power has been assured: they own the land and the means of production. The friendly relations between the peasant Soviet Republics and the Russian Socialist Republic have already been consolidated by the practical results of our policy.

We can also welcome the forthcoming signing of a treaty with Persia, friendly relations with whom are assured by the fact that the fundamental interests of all peoples suffering from the yoke of imperialism coincide.

We must also note that friendly relations with Afghanistan, and still more so with Turkey, are being steadily established and strengthened. As for the latter power, the Entente countries have done everything they could to render impossible any more or less normal relations between her and the West-European countries. This circumstance, coupled with consolidation of the Soviets, is steadily

strengthening the alliance and the friendly relations between Russia and the oppressed nations of the East, despite the bourgeoisie's resistance and intrigues and the continuing encirclement of Russia by bourgeois countries. The chief factor in politics today is the violence being used by the imperialists against peoples which have not had the good fortune to be among the victors; this world policy of imperialism is leading to closer relations, alliance and friendship among all the oppressed nations. The success we have achieved in this respect in the West as well, in relation to more Europeanised states, goes to show that the present principles of our foreign policy are correct and that the improvement in our international position rests on a firm basis. We are confident that, by continuing our peace policy and by making concessions (and we must do so if we wish to avoid war), the basic line of our policy and the fundamental interests which stem from the very nature of imperialist policy will come into their own and will make it more and more imperative for the R.S.F.S.R. to establish closer relations with a growing number of neighbouring states, despite the intrigues and machinations of the imperialists, who, of course, are always capable of provoking a quarrel between us and some other state. Such relations are our guarantee that we shall be able to devote ourselves whole-heartedly to economic development and that we shall be able, for a longer period, to work calmly, steadfastly and confidently.

Published in 1921 in the book  
*The Eighth All-Russia Congress  
of Soviets. Verbatim Report*

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 31, pp. 490-92

**From SPEECH AT A PLENARY MEETING  
OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS'  
AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES**

**February 28, 1921**

Before going on to the domestic situation—a subject which, quite naturally, arouses great interest and much concern—let me run over the salient international developments. To be brief, I shall deal with only three. The first is our conference with Turkish delegates which has opened here in Moscow. This is an especially welcome fact, because there had been many obstacles to direct negotiations with the Turkish Government delegation, and now that there is an opportunity of reaching an understanding here in Moscow, we feel sure that a firm foundation will be laid for closer relations and friendship. Of course, this will not be achieved through diplomatic machinations (in which, we are not afraid to admit, our adversaries have the edge on us), but through the fact that over the past few years both nations have had to endure untold suffering at the hands of the imperialist powers. A previous speaker referred to the harm of isolation from the imperialist countries. But when a wolf attacks a sheep, there is hardly any point in advising the sheep to avoid isolation from the wolf. (*Laughter, applause*). Up to now, the Eastern peoples may have been like sheep before the imperialist wolf, but Soviet Russia was the first to show that, despite her unparalleled military weakness, it is not so easy for the wolf to get his claws and teeth into her. This example has proved to be catching for many nations, regardless of whether or not they sympathise with the “Bolshevik rumour-mongers”. We are a popular topic all over the world, and, in relation to Turkey, have even been described as malicious rumour-mongers. Of course, we have

so far been unable to do anything in this sphere, but the Turkish workers and peasants have demonstrated that the resistance on the part of modern nations to plunder is a thing that has to be reckoned with: Turkey herself resisted plunder by the imperialist governments with such vigour that even the strongest of them have had to keep their hands off her. That is what makes us regard the current negotiations with the Turkish Government as a very great achievement. We have no hidden motives. We know that these negotiations will proceed within a very modest framework, but they are important because the workers and peasants of all countries are drawing steadily closer together, despite all the formidable obstructions. This is something we should bear in mind when assessing our present difficulties. . . .

The third international question is the events in the Caucasus. There have been large-scale developments there recently, and although we do not yet know the details their implication is that we are on the brink of a major war. We were, of course, disturbed at the clash between Armenia and Georgia, for these events turned the Armenian-Georgian war into an insurrection, with a section of the Russian troops taking part. The upshot of all this was that, for the time being, the tables have been turned on the Armenian bourgeoisie, which had been scheming against us, so that, according to the latest but still unconfirmed reports, Soviet power has been established in Tiflis. (*Applause*). We know that the insurrection began in the neutral zone of Armenia, which lies between Georgia and Armenia, and which Georgia had occupied with the consent of the Entente imperialists. When the Mensheviks, particularly the Georgian Mensheviks, speak of the harm of isolation from the Western powers, they usually mean the reliance on the Entente imperialists, who are stronger than anyone else. But some whiteguards tend to forget that the advanced capitalists are more deceitful than anyone else, and say to themselves: can Armenia, the Armenian peasants, etc., or the ravaged Soviet Republic be compared to the united imperialist powers of the world? Let us turn to the advanced capitalists for they are the civilised forces of the world. That is how the Georgian Mensheviks seek to justify their unseemly defence of the capitalists, and they had

control of the only railway line, the Armenian peasants' food supply line.

No one will have the patience to read all the telegrams, statements and protests we exchanged with Georgia on this question. If we had had a peace treaty with Georgia, our policy would have been to procrastinate as long as possible. You must understand, however, that the Armenian peasants did not view the treaty question in that light, and things culminated in the terrible insurrection which broke out in early February and spread with astonishing rapidity, involving not only Armenians, but also Georgians. There has been hardly any news from over there, but our assumptions have been borne out by the latest available report. We know perfectly well that the Georgian bourgeoisie and the Georgian Mensheviks do not rely for support on their working people, but on their capitalists, who are only looking for a pretext to start hostilities. Upon the other hand, we have had our stake on the working people for three years and we shall continue to have it on them to the last even in this backward and oppressed country. With all our circumspection and all our efforts to strengthen the Red Army, we shall ultimately do everything possible to put out the flames in the Caucasus. We shall demonstrate in the East what we have been able to demonstrate in the West: when Soviet power is in, national oppression is out. On this, in the final analysis, depends the outcome of the struggle, and because of their superior numbers the workers and peasants will ultimately prove to be stronger than the capitalists.

*Pravda* No. 46,  
March 2, 1921

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 32, pp. 147-48,  
149-51



## LETTER TO G. K. ORJONIKIDZE

March 2, 1921

Sergo Orjonikidze,

Please convey to the Georgian Communists, and in particular to all members of the Georgian Revolutionary Committee, my warm greetings to Soviet Georgia. My special request to them is to inform me whether or not we are in complete agreement on the following three questions:

First, immediate arming of the workers and poor peasants and formation of a strong Georgian Red Army.

Second, there is need for a special policy of concessions with regard to the Georgian intelligentsia and small merchants. It should be realised that it is not only imprudent to nationalise them, but that there is even need for certain sacrifices in order to improve their position and enable them to continue their small trade.

Third, it is of tremendous importance to devise an acceptable compromise for a bloc with Jordania or similar Georgian Mensheviks, who before the uprising had not been absolutely opposed to the idea of Soviet power in Georgia on certain terms.

Please bear in mind that Georgia's domestic and international positions both require that her Communists should avoid any mechanical copying of the Russian pattern. They must skilfully work out their own flexible tactics, based on bigger concessions to all the petty-bourgeois elements.

Please reply,

*Lenin*

*Pravda Gruzii* No. 5,  
March 6, 1921

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 32, p. 160

## TELEGRAM TO THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY COUNCIL OF THE 11th ARMY

Copy to R.M.C., Caucasus Front

Copy to the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia

Copy to Comrade Orjonikidze

In view of the fact that units of the 11th Army are on the territory of Georgia, you are instructed to establish complete contact with the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia and to abide strictly by the directives of the Revolutionary Committee, undertaking no measures which might affect the interests of the local population, without co-ordinating them with the Georgian Revolutionary Committee; to observe particular respect for the sovereign bodies of Georgia; to display particular attention and caution in regard to the Georgian population. Issue the appropriate directive at once to all army institutions, including the Special Department. Hold to account all who infringe this directive. Inform us of every case of such infringement, or of even the least friction and misunderstanding with the local population.

*Lenin*  
Chairman, Defence Council

Written March 10, 1921

Published in *Pravda Gruzii* No. 13,  
March 17, 1921

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 35, p. 479

**MESSAGE OF GREETINGS TO THE CONFERENCE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF WOMEN'S  
DEPARTMENTS OF THE PEOPLES OF SOVIET  
REGIONS AND REPUBLICS IN THE EAST**

I deeply regret that I am unable to attend your conference because of the pressure of work. Please accept my heartfelt greetings and best wishes of success in your work, particularly in preparing for the forthcoming First All-Russia Non-Party Congress of Women of the East, which, correctly prepared and conducted, must greatly help *the cause of awakening the women of the East and uniting them organisationally*.

*Lenin*

*Pravda* No. 77,  
April 10, 1921

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 32, p. 299

## TO THE COMRADE COMMUNISTS OF AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ARMENIA, DAGHESTAN, AND THE MOUNTAINEER REPUBLIC

I send my warmest greetings to the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus, and should like to express the hope that their close alliance will serve as a model of national peace, unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under the capitalist system.

But important as national peace among the workers and peasants of the Caucasian nationalities is, the maintenance and development of the Soviet power, as the transition to socialism, are even more important. The task is difficult, but fully feasible. The most important thing for its successful fulfilment is that the Communists of the Transcaucasus should be fully alive to the *singularity* of their position, and of the position of their Republics, as distinct from the position and conditions of the R.S.F.S.R.; that they should appreciate the need to refrain from copying our tactics and thoughtfully vary them in adaptation to the differing concrete conditions.

The Soviet Republic of Russia had no outside political or military assistance. On the contrary, for years and years it fought the Entente military invasions and blockade.

The Soviet Republics of the Caucasus have had political and some military assistance from the R.S.F.S.R. This alone has made a vast difference.

Second, there is now no cause to fear any Entente invasion or military assistance to the Georgian, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Daghestan and mountaineer whiteguards. The Entente "burnt their fingers" in Russia and that will probably compel them to be more cautious for some time.

Third, the Caucasian Republics have an even more pronounced peasant character than Russia.

Fourth, Russia has been, and to a considerable extent still is, economically isolated from the advanced capitalist countries. The Caucasus is in a position to start trading and "living together" with the capitalist West sooner and with greater ease.

These are not all the differences, but they are sufficient to demonstrate the need for different tactics.

You will need to practise more moderation and caution, and show more readiness to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and particularly the peasantry. You must make the swiftest, most intense and all possible economic use of the capitalist West through a policy of concessions and trade. Oil, manganese, coal (Tkvarcheli mines) and copper are some of your immense mineral resources. You have every possibility to develop an extensive policy of concessions and trade with foreign countries.

This must be done on a wide scale, with firmness, skill and circumspection, and it must be utilised to the utmost for improving the condition of the workers and peasants, and for enlisting the intelligentsia in the work of economic construction. Through trade with Italy, America and other countries, you must exert every effort to develop the productive forces of your rich land, your water resources and irrigation which is especially important as a means of advancing agriculture and livestock farming.

What the Republics of the Caucasus can and must do, as distinct from the R.S.F.S.R., is to effect a slower, more cautious and more systematic transition to socialism. That is what you must understand, and what you must be able to carry out, as distinct from our own tactics.

We fought to make the first breach in the wall of world capitalism. The breach has been made. We have maintained our positions in a fierce and superhuman war against the Whites, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who were supported by the Entente countries, their blockade and military assistance.

You, Comrade Communists of the Caucasus, have no need to force a breach. You must take advantage of the favourable international situation in 1921, and learn to



build the new with greater caution and more method. In 1921, Europe and the world are not what they were in 1917 and 1918.

Do not copy our tactics, but analyse the reasons for their peculiar features, the conditions that gave rise to them, and their results; go beyond the letter, and apply the spirit, the essence and the lessons of the 1917-21 experience. You must make trade with the capitalist countries your economic foundation right away. The cost should be no object even if it means letting them have tens of millions' worth of valuable minerals.

You must make immediate efforts to improve the condition of the peasants and start on extensive electrification and irrigation projects. What you need most is irrigation, for more than anything else it will revive the area and regenerate it, bury the past and make the transition to socialism more certain.

I hope you will pardon my slipshod style: I have had to write the letter at very short notice, so as to send it along with Comrade Myasnikov. Once again I send my best greetings and wishes to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus.

*N. Lenin*

Moscow, April 14, 1921

Pravda Gruzii No. 55,  
May 8, 1921

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 32, pp. 316-18

**From THESES  
FOR A REPORT ON THE TACTICS  
OF THE R.C.P. TO THE THIRD CONGRESS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

**1. THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE R.S.F.S.R.**

The international position of the R.S.F.S.R. at present is distinguished by a certain equilibrium, which, although extremely unstable, has nevertheless given rise to a peculiar state of affairs in world politics.

This peculiarity is the following. On the one hand, the international bourgeoisie is filled with furious hatred of, and hostility towards, Soviet Russia, and is prepared at any moment to fling itself upon her in order to strangle her. On the other hand, all attempts at military intervention, which have cost the international bourgeoisie hundreds of millions of francs, ended in complete failure, in spite of the fact that the Soviet power was then weaker than it is now and that the Russian landowners and capitalists had whole armies on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. Opposition to the war against Soviet Russia has grown considerably in all capitalist countries, adding fuel to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and extending to very wide sections of the petty-bourgeois democrats. The conflict of interests between the various imperialist countries has become acute, and is growing more acute every day. The revolutionary movement among the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples of the East is growing with remarkable vigour. The result of all these conditions is that international imperialism has proved unable to strangle Soviet Russia, although it is far stronger, and has been obliged for the time being to grant her recognition, or semi-recognition, and to conclude trade agreements with her.

The result is a state of equilibrium which, although highly unstable and precarious, enables the Socialist Republic to exist—not for long, of course—within the capitalist encirclement.

## 2. THE INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENT OF CLASS FORCES

This state of affairs has given rise to the following international alignment of class forces.

The international bourgeoisie, deprived of the opportunity of waging open war against Soviet Russia, is waiting and watching for the moment when circumstances will permit it to resume the war.

The proletariat in all the advanced capitalist countries has already formed its vanguard, the Communist Parties, which are growing, making steady progress towards winning the majority of the proletariat in each country, and destroying the influence of the old trade union bureaucrats and of the upper stratum of the working class of America and Europe, which has been corrupted by imperialist privileges.

The petty-bourgeois democrats in the capitalist countries, whose foremost sections are represented by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals,<sup>83</sup> serve today as the mainstay of capitalism, since they retain an influence over the majority, or a considerable section, of the industrial and commercial workers and office employees who are afraid that if revolution breaks out they will lose the relative petty-bourgeois prosperity created by the privileges of imperialism. But the growing economic crisis is worsening the condition of broad sections of the people everywhere, and this, with the looming inevitability of new imperialist wars if capitalism is preserved, is steadily weakening this mainstay.

The masses of the working people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, were roused to political life at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly by the revolutions in Russia, Turkey, Persia and China. The imperialist war of 1914-18 and the Soviet power in Russia are completing the process of converting these masses into an active factor in world politics and in

the revolutionary destruction of imperialism, although the educated philistines of Europe and America, including the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, stubbornly refuse to see this. British India is at the head of these countries, and there revolution is maturing in proportion, on the one hand, to the growth of the industrial and railway proletariat, and, on the other, to the increase in the brutal terrorism of the British, who with ever greater frequency resort to massacres (Amritsar),<sup>84</sup> public floggings, etc.

Published in 1921  
as a separate pamphlet  
by the Press department  
of the Communist  
International, Moscow

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 32, pp. 453-55

**From REPORT ON THE TACTICS  
OF THE R.C.P. TO THE THIRD CONGRESS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

**July 5, 1921**

Much inflammable material has accumulated in capitalist countries, as well as in those countries which up to now have been regarded merely as the objects and not as the subjects of history, i.e., the colonies and semi-colonies. It is quite possible, therefore, that insurrections, great battles and revolutions may break out there sooner or later, and very suddenly too. . . .

Here I would also like to emphasise the significance of *the movement in the colonies*. In this respect we see in all the old parties, in all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois labour parties affiliated to the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, survivals of the old sentimental views: they insist on their profound sympathy for oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The movement in the colonial countries is still regarded as an insignificant national and totally peaceful movement. But this is not so. It has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important to emphasise the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle. Of course, there are many more difficulties in this



enormous sphere than in any other, but at all events the movement is advancing. And in spite of the fact that the masses of toilers—the peasants in the colonial countries—are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution.

Newspaper report published  
July 9, 1921  
in *Pravda* No. 144

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 32, pp. 478-79,  
481-82

Published in full  
July 14, 1921  
in *Bulletin Tretyego*  
*kongressa Kommunisticheskogo*  
*Internatsionala*

TO G. I. SAFAROV

August 7

Comrade Safarov,

Thank you very much for the pamphlet<sup>85</sup> and other material.

We are sending Joffe to make an attempt to *combine* your line and Tomsky's.

That *must* be done.

Unquestionably grain and meat to Moscow, *first and foremost*.

For this purpose, both the "New Economic Policy" in general and a *number* of concessions and bonuses to the merchants.

At the same time, systematic and maximum concern for the Moslem poor, for their organisation and education.

Such a policy can and must be worked out and *fixed* (in a number of the *most precise* directives).

It must be a model for the *whole* East.

Best greetings.

Yours,

*Lenin*

P. S. After the line has been worked out, you, too, will probably be granted leave.

Written August 7, 1921

Sent to Tashkent

First published (in abridged form) in the Fourth (Russian) Edition of the *Collected Works*, Vol. 35

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 35, p. 518

## LETTER TO BHUPENDRA NATH DATTA

Dear comrade Datta,

I have read your thesis. We should not discuss about the social classes. I think we should abide by my thesis on colonial question.<sup>86</sup> Gather statistical facts about Peasant Leagues if they exist in India.

Yours. . .

V. Ulyanov (Lenin)

Written in English on August 26, 1921

First published in the book:

Bhupendra Nath Datta,

*Dialectics of Land-Economics of India*, Calcutta, p. III.

*Collected Works*,

5th Russ. ed.,

Vol. 53, p. 142

## TALK WITH A DELEGATION OF THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 5, 1921

First question of the Mongolian delegation: "Comrade Lenin, what do you think about the establishment of a People's Revolutionary Party in our country and what is most important for us?"

Comrade Lenin outlined to our delegation our country's international situation and pointed out that owing to the M.P.R.'s geographical position the imperialist powers, in case of war, would try to seize our country and use it as a jumping-off ground for military operations against another country. Therefore, Lenin said, the only right way for every working person in your country was to fight for state and economic independence in alliance with the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia. This fight could not be carried on isolatedly, therefore the establishment of a party of Mongolian arats was a pledge of success in their struggle.

The Mongolian delegation's second question: "Will the national liberation struggle be victorious?"

Comrade Lenin's answer:

"I have been in the revolutionary movement myself for thirty years and I know by experience how difficult it is for any people to liberate themselves from their external and internal enslavers. Although Mongolia is a cattle-breeding country and the bulk of her population are nomad herdsmen, she had achieved great progress in her revolution, and most important of all, has made good these successes by creating a People's Revolutionary Party of her own, whose aim is to become a mass party uncluttered by alien elements."

The Mongolian delegation's third question: "Ought not the People's Revolutionary Party be transformed into a Communist Party?"

Comrade Lenin's reply:

"I should not recommend it, because one party cannot be 'transformed' into another." Comrade Lenin explained the essence of a Communist Party as a party of the proletariat, and said: "The revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."

Comrade Lenin elaborated on the idea that it was possible and necessary for the M.P.R. to follow a non-capitalist path of development, the main condition for which was hard work on the part of the People's Revolutionary Party and the Government, so that this work and the increased influence of the Party and the authorities would result in a growth of the number of co-operatives, in the introduction of new forms of economic activity and national culture, and would rally the arats behind the Party and the Government in the interests of the country's economic and cultural development. It was only from the islets of the new economic way of life created by the efforts of the Party and the Government that the new non-capitalist economic system of arat Mongolia would take shape.

First published in 1934  
in the book *The Ninth Congress  
of the Mongolian People's  
Revolutionary Party*  
(September 28-October 5, 1934),  
Ulan-Bator, Modern Mongolia  
Publishing House

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 42, pp. 360-61



## LETTER TO THE EASTERN PEOPLES' PROPAGANDA AND ACTION COUNCIL<sup>87</sup>

Dear Comrades,

My very best wishes for your publication. To my great regret ill-health prevents me from contributing an article. I hope that, thanks to your newspaper, the foremost representatives of the Eastern toilers will be drawn into political activity more quickly and on a wider scale. The destiny of the whole of Western civilisation depends to an enormous degree on the working masses of the East being drawn into political life.

With best wishes and greetings,

*Lenin,*

Chairman, Council of  
People's Commissars of  
the R.S.F.S.R.

Dictated over the telephone  
not earlier than December 17, 1921

First published in *Pravda*  
No. 112, April 22, 1957

*Collected Works,*  
5th Russ. ed.,  
Vol. 44, p. 282

## From the Article ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITANT MATERIALISM

In addition to the alliance with consistent materialists who do not belong to the Communist Party, of no less and perhaps even of more importance for the work which militant materialism should perform is an alliance with those modern natural scientists who incline towards materialism and are not afraid to defend and preach it as against the modish philosophical wanderings into idealism and scepticism which are prevalent in so-called educated society.

The article by A. Timiryazev on Einstein's theory of relativity published in *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* No. 1-2 permits us to hope that the journal will succeed in effecting this second alliance too. Greater attention should be paid to it. It should be remembered that the sharp upheaval which modern natural science is undergoing very often gives rise to reactionary philosophical schools and minor schools, trends and minor trends. Unless, therefore, the problems raised by the recent revolution in natural science are followed, and unless natural scientists are enlisted in the work of a philosophical journal, militant materialism can be neither militant nor materialism. Timiryazev was obliged to observe in the first issue of the journal that the theory of Einstein, who, according to Timiryazev, is himself not making any active attack on the foundations of materialism, has already been seized upon by a vast number of bourgeois intellectuals of all countries; it should be noted that this applies not only to Einstein, but to a number, if not to the majority, of the great reformers of natural science since the end of the nineteenth century.

For our attitude towards this phenomenon to be a politically conscious one, it must be realised that no natural

science and no materialism can hold its own in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of the bourgeois world outlook unless it stands on solid philosophical ground. In order to hold his own in this struggle and carry it to a victorious finish, the natural scientist must be a modern materialist, a conscious adherent of the materialism represented by Marx, i.e., he must be a dialectical materialist. In order to attain this aim, the contributors to *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* must arrange for the systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from a materialist standpoint, i.e., the dialectics which Marx applied practically in his *Capital* and in his historical and political works, and applied so successfully that now every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India, and China)—i.e., the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the world population and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto conditioned the stagnation and decay of many advanced European countries—every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.

March 12, 1922

*Pod Znamenem Marksizma* No. 3,  
March 1922

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 33, pp. 232-33

Signed: *N. Lenin*

## ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF "PRAVDA"

It is ten years since *Pravda*, the legal—legal even under *tsarist* law—Bolshevik daily paper, was founded. This decade was preceded by, approximately, another decade: nine years (1903-12) since the emergence of Bolshevism, or thirteen years (1900-12), if we count from the founding in 1900 of the "Bolshevik-oriented" old *Iskra*.<sup>88</sup>

The tenth anniversary of a Bolshevik daily published in Russia. . . . Only ten years have elapsed! But measured in terms of our struggle and movement they are equal to a hundred years. For the pace of social development in the past five years has been positively staggering if we apply the old yardstick of European philistines like the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. These civilised philistines are accustomed to regard as "natural" a situation in which hundreds of millions of people (over a thousand million, to be exact) in the colonies and in semi-dependent and poor countries tolerate the treatment meted out to Indians or Chinese, tolerate incredible exploitation and outright depredation, and hunger, and violence, and humiliation, all in order that "civilised" men might "freely", "democratically", according to "parliamentary procedure", decide whether the booty should be divided up peacefully, or whether ten million or so must be done to death in this division of the imperialist booty, yesterday between Germany and Britain, tomorrow between Japan and the U.S.A. (with France and Britain participating in one form or another).

The basic reason for this tremendous acceleration of world development is that new hundreds of millions of people have been drawn into it. The old bourgeois and imperialist Europe, which was accustomed to look upon itself as the centre of the universe, rotted and burst like a putrid

ulcer in the first imperialist holocaust. No matter how the Spenglers and all the enlightened philistines, who are capable of admiring (or even studying) Spengler, may lament it, this decline of the old Europe is but an episode in the history of the downfall of the world bourgeoisie, oversaturated by imperialist rapine and the oppression of the majority of the world's population.

That majority has now awakened and has begun a movement which even the "mightiest" powers cannot stem. They stand no chance. For the present "victors" in the first imperialist slaughter have not the strength to defeat small—tiny, I might say—Ireland, nor can they emerge victorious from the confusion in currency and finance issues that reigns in their own midst. Meanwhile, India and China are seething. They represent over 700 million people, and together with the neighbouring Asian countries, that are in all ways similar to them, over half of the world's inhabitants. Inexorably and with mounting momentum they are approaching their 1905, with the essential and important difference that in 1905 the revolution in Russia could still proceed (at any rate at the beginning) in isolation, that is, without other countries being immediately drawn in. But the revolutions that are maturing in India and China are being drawn into—have already been drawn into—the revolutionary struggle, the revolutionary movement, the world revolution.

The tenth anniversary of *Pravda*, the legal Bolshevik daily, is a clearly defined marker of this great acceleration of the greatest world revolution. In 1906-07, it seemed that the tsarist government had completely crushed the revolution. A few years later the Bolshevik Party was able—in a different form, by a different method—to penetrate into the very citadel of the enemy and daily, "legally", proceed with its work of undermining the accursed tsarist and landowner autocracy from within. A few more years passed, and the proletarian revolution, organised by Bolshevism, triumphed.

Some ten or so revolutionaries shared in the founding of the old *Iskra* in 1900, and only about forty attended the birth of Bolshevism at the illegal congresses in Brussels and London in 1903.

In 1912-13, when the legal Bolshevik *Pravda* came into



being it had the support of hundreds of thousands of workers, who by their modest contributions<sup>89</sup> were able to overcome both the oppression of tsarism and the competition of the Mensheviks, those petty-bourgeois traitors to socialism.

In November 1917, nine million electors out of a total of thirty-six million voted for the Bolsheviks in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. But if we take the actual struggle, and not merely the elections, at the close of October and in November 1917, the Bolsheviks had the support of the *majority* of the proletariat and class-conscious peasantry, as represented by the majority of the delegates at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and by the majority of the most active and politically conscious section of the working people, namely, the twelve-million-strong army of that day.

These few figures illustrating the “acceleration” of the world revolutionary movement in the past twenty years give a very small and very incomplete picture. They afford only a very approximate idea of the history of no more than 150 million people, whereas in these twenty years the revolution has developed into an invincible force in countries with a total population of over a thousand million (the whole of Asia, not to forget South Africa, which recently reminded the world of its claim to *human* and not slavish existence, and by methods which were not altogether “parliamentary”).<sup>90</sup>

Some infant Spenglers—I apologise for the expression—may conclude (every variety of nonsense can be expected from the “clever” leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals) that this estimate of the revolutionary forces fails to take into account the European and American proletariat. These “clever” leaders always argue as if the fact that birth comes nine months after conception necessarily means that the exact hour and minute of birth can be defined beforehand, also the position of the infant during delivery, the condition of the mother and the exact degree of pain and danger both will suffer. Very “clever”! These gentry cannot for the life of them understand that from the point of view of the development of the international revolution the transition from Chartism to Henderson’s servility to the bourgeoisie, or the transition from Varlin to

Renaudel, from Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel to Südekum, Scheidemann and Noske, can only be likened to an automobile passing *from* a smooth highway stretching for hundreds of miles *to* a dirty stinking puddle of a few yards in length on that highway.

Men are the makers of history. But the Chartists, the Varlins and the Liebknechts applied their minds and hearts to it. The leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals apply other parts of the anatomy: they fertilise the ground for the appearance of new Chartists, new Varlins and new Liebknechts.

At this *most difficult* moment it would be most harmful for revolutionaries to indulge in self-deception. Though Bolshevism *has become* an international force, though in *all* the civilised and advanced countries new Chartists, new Varlins, new Liebknechts have been born, and are growing up as legal (just as legal as our *Pravda* was under the tsar ten years ago) Communist Parties, nonetheless, for the time being, the international bourgeoisie still remains incomparably stronger than its class enemy. This bourgeoisie, which has done everything in its power to hamper the birth of proletarian power in Russia and to multiply tenfold the dangers and suffering attending its birth, is still in a position to condemn millions and tens of millions to torment and death through its whiteguard and imperialist wars, etc. That is something we must not forget. And we must skillfully adapt our tactics to this specific situation. The bourgeoisie is still able freely to torment, torture and kill. But it cannot halt the inevitable and—from the standpoint of world history—not far distant triumph of the revolutionary proletariat.

May 2, 1922

*Pravda* No. 98,  
May 5, 1922

Signed: N. Lenin

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 33, pp. 349-52

**From INTERVIEW GIVEN TO MICHAEL FARBMAN,  
"OBSERVER" AND "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"  
CORRESPONDENT**

1. *Question.* The anti-Russian press describes Herriot's<sup>91</sup> reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a definite change in Soviet Russia's foreign policy.

Is that true? Is it true that Russia regards British policy in the Middle East as a challenge and is ready to conclude an agreement with France directed against Britain?

*Answer.* I consider it absolutely incorrect to describe Herriot's reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a change, even a slight one, in Soviet Russia's policy in general, or as being anti-British in particular. We certainly value very highly both Herriot's reception in Moscow and the step taken towards a rapprochement with France or towards negotiations with her, which have now become possible, probable and, I should like to believe, essential. Any rapprochement with France is something we very much desire, especially in view of the fact that Russia's commercial interests imperatively demand closer relations with this strong continental power. But we are convinced that this rapprochement does not in the least imply that some change must necessarily take place in our policy towards Britain. We believe fully friendly relations with both powers to be quite possible, and that is our aim. We believe that the development of commercial relations will inevitably go a very long way towards achieving this aim. We believe that the interests of Britain and France, rightly understood, will likewise operate in that direction. We believe that the mutual interests of both Britain and France, insofar as they have points of contact with Russia, do not under any circumstances contain

elements of inevitable hostility between Britain and France. On the contrary, we even think that peaceful and friendly relations between these powers and Russia are a guarantee (I am almost prepared to say—the strongest guarantee) that peace and friendship between Britain and France will last a long time, and that all possible, and under present circumstances probable, differences between France and Britain will most speedily and truly find a happy solution.

2. *Question.* Is not the virtual termination of the Greco-Turkish War, a war supported by Britain, an opportune moment for the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian agreement?

*Answer.* Of course, the termination of the Greco-Turkish War, which had Britain's support, is a factor that, to a certain extent, improves the chances of an Anglo-Russian agreement being concluded. We looked for such an agreement even before that war ended and shall now continue to seek it with the utmost energy. True, some of the problems connected with the termination of that war are objects of our disagreement with Britain. But, first of all, the peace which has followed the Greco-Turkish War is in our opinion such an advantage to international politics as a whole that we hope for an improvement in the general conditions under which they are conducted, thanks to the Greco-Turkish peace. Secondly, we do not consider the differences between Britain and ourselves to be in any way insurmountable. On the contrary, we expect that, with the Middle East problem entering various stages, the near future will show us to what extent we are right in hoping that the end of the Greco-Turkish War will also be the end of the conflicts and differences which placed that war in the forefront of international politics. We are doing everything in our power to make the end of that war also the end of all friction and disagreement with Britain, and we hope that the interests of the British Government will rise on this occasion, too, above any promptings and the frequently insincere utterances of the anti-Russian press.

3. *Question.* Do you consider Russia's participation in the eastern question<sup>92</sup> a matter of prestige alone, or do you proceed exclusively from Russia's real interests? Does the Russian Government agree to the French proposal to permit Russia's participation in only that part of the Conference that will decide the question of the Straits?

*Answer.* I consider Russia's participation in the settlement of the Middle East question to have nothing to do with prestige. I hope that our international politics as a whole over a period of five years have shown completely that we are quite indifferent to questions of prestige and that we are incapable of putting forward any demand whatsoever or of worsening the real chances of peace between states solely on account of prestige. I am confident that in no other country are the masses so indifferent to prestige and even so prepared to treat the question of prestige as such with happy ridicule. We are of the opinion that modern diplomacy will rapidly come to regard questions of prestige precisely in this way.

Our Middle East policy is a matter of Russia's most real, immediate and vital interest and of the interest of a number of states federated with her. If all these states did not succeed in getting their demand to participate in the Middle East Conference satisfied, there would remain a huge mass of elements of hostility, conflict and discontent; their non-participation would involve such difficulties in purely commercial affairs between Eastern Europe on the one hand, and all other states on the other, that either there would remain no grounds whatever for peaceful coexistence or such existence would be extraordinarily difficult.

The Russian Government, therefore, is not satisfied with the proposal from Paris to allow Russia to participate only in that part of the Conference which will settle the problem of the Straits. We are of the opinion that such a limitation would inevitably lead to a number of very practical, immediate inconveniences, in particular economic inconveniences, from which France and Britain would themselves suffer, most probably in the near future.

4. *Question.* What is the Russian programme for the solution of the Straits problem?

*Answer.* Our Straits programme (still only approximate, of course) contains, among other things, the following:

First, the satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations. We consider this essential, and not only in the interests of national independence. Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a



tremendous number of nationalities such as could hardly be found in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score. Our experience has left us with the firm conviction that only exclusive attention to the interests of various nations can remove grounds for conflicts, can remove mutual mistrust, can remove the fear of any intrigues and create that confidence, especially on the part of workers and peasants speaking different languages, without which there absolutely cannot be peaceful relations between peoples or anything like a successful development of everything that is of value in present-day civilisation.

Secondly, our programme includes the closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war. This is in the direct commercial interests of all powers, not only of those whose territory is in the immediate vicinity of the Straits, but of all others, too. It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace,\* although there is usually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and grandiloquent formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious decisions and measures that would certainly lead to peace, if not to the complete elimination of the war danger.

Thirdly, our programme on the Straits includes complete freedom of commerce by sea. After what I have said above I do not think it at all necessary to explain this point or make it more concrete.

*Pravda* No. 254,  
November 10, 1922

*Collected Works,*  
Vol. 33, pp. 383-86

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\* This refers to the Peace Treaty of Versailles.—*Ed.*

Continuation of the notes.  
December 30, 1922

## THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITIES OR "AUTONOMISATION"

I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough in the notorious question of autonomisation,<sup>93</sup> which, it appears, is officially called the question of the union of Soviet socialist republics.

When this question arose last summer, I was ill; and then in autumn I relied too much on my recovery and on the October and December plenary meetings giving me an opportunity of intervening in this question. However, I did not manage to attend the October Plenary Meeting (when this question came up) or the one in December, and so the question passed me by almost completely.

I have only had time for a talk with Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who came from the Caucasus and told me how this matter stood in Georgia. I have also managed to exchange a few words with Comrade Zinoviev and express my apprehensions on this matter. From what I was told by Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who was at the head of the commission sent by the C.C. to "investigate" the Georgian incident, I could only draw the greatest apprehensions. If matters had come to such a pass that Orjonikidze could go to the extreme of applying physical violence, as Comrade Dzerzhinsky informed me, we can imagine what a mess we have got ourselves into. Obviously the whole business of "autonomisation" was radically wrong and badly timed.

It is said that a united apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from that

same Russian apparatus which, as I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?

There is no doubt that that measure should have been delayed somewhat until we could say that we vouched for our apparatus as our own. But now, we must, in all conscience, admit the contrary; the apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and tsarist hotch-potch and there has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the course of the past five years without the help of other countries and because we have been "busy" most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

It is quite natural that in such circumstances the "freedom to secede from the union" by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietised workers will drown in that tide of chauvinistic Great-Russian riffraff like a fly in milk.

It is said in defence of this measure that the People's Commissariats directly concerned with national psychology and national education were set up as separate bodies. But there the question arises: can these People's Commissariats be made quite independent? and secondly: were we careful enough to take measures to provide the non-Russians with a real safeguard against the truly Russian bully? I do not think we took such measures although we could and should have done so.

I think that Stalin's haste and his infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious "nationalist-socialism", played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles.

I also fear that Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who went to the Caucasus to investigate the "crime" of those "nationalist-socialists", distinguished himself there by his truly Russian frame of mind (it is common knowledge that people of other nationalities who have become Russified overdo this Russian frame of mind) and that the impartiality of his whole commission was typified well enough by Orjonikidze's

“manhandling”. I think that no provocation or even insult can justify such Russian manhandling and that Comrade Dzerzhinsky was inexcusably guilty in adopting a light-hearted attitude towards it.

For all the citizens in the Caucasus Orjonikidze was the authority. Orjonikidze had no right to display that irritability to which he and Dzerzhinsky referred. On the contrary, Orjonikidze should have behaved with a restraint which cannot be demanded of any ordinary citizen, still less of a man accused of a “political” crime. And, to tell the truth, those nationalist-socialists were citizens who were accused of a political crime, and the terms of the accusation were such that it could not be described otherwise.

Here we have an important question of principle: how is internationalism to be understood?\*

*Lenin*

December 30, 1922

Taken down by M.V.

Continuation of the notes.

December 31, 1922

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the

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\* After this the following phrase was crossed out in the shorthand text: “It seems to me that our comrades have not studied this important question of principle sufficiently.”—*Ed.*

Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past.

I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviks, to Communists, in greater detail. And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is neglectful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of "nationalist-socialism" (whereas he himself is a real and true "nationalist-socialist", and even a vulgar Great-Russian bully), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; "offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest—to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards



the national minorities. That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation.

*Lenin*

Taken down by M.V.  
December 31, 1922

Continuation of the notes.  
December 31, 1922

What practical measures must be taken in the present situation?

*Firstly*, we must maintain and strengthen the union of socialist republics. Of this there can be no doubt. This measure is necessary for us and it is necessary for the world communist proletariat in its struggle against the world bourgeoisie and its defence against bourgeois intrigues.

*Secondly*, the union of socialist republics must be retained for its diplomatic apparatus. By the way, this apparatus is an exceptional component of our state apparatus. We have not allowed a single influential person from the old tsarist apparatus into it. All sections with any authority are composed of Communists. That is why it has already won for itself (this may be said boldly) the name of a reliable communist apparatus purged to an incomparably greater extent of the old tsarist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements than that which we have had to make do with in other People's Commissariats.

*Thirdly*, exemplary punishment must be inflicted on Comrade Orjonikidze (I say this all the more regretfully as I am one of his personal friends and have worked with him abroad) and the investigation of all the material which Dzerzhinsky's commission has collected must be completed or started over again to correct the enormous mass of wrongs and biased judgements which it doubtlessly con-

tains. The political responsibility for all this truly Great-Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.

*Fourthly*, the strictest rules must be introduced on the use of the national language in the non-Russian republics of our union, and these rules must be checked with special care. There is no doubt that our apparatus being what it is, there is bound to be, on the pretext of unity in the railway service, unity in the fiscal service and so on, a mass of truly Russian abuses. Special ingenuity is necessary for the struggle against these abuses, not to mention special sincerity on the part of those who undertake this struggle. A detailed code will be required, and only the nationals living in the republic in question can draw it up at all successfully. And then we cannot be sure in advance that as a result of this work we shall not take a step backward at our next Congress of Soviets, i.e., retain the union of Soviet socialist republics only for military and diplomatic affairs, and in all other respects restore full independence to the individual People's Commissariats.

It must be borne in mind that the decentralisation of the People's Commissariats and the lack of co-ordination in their work as far as Moscow and other centres are concerned can be compensated sufficiently by Party authority, if it is exercised with sufficient prudence and impartiality; the harm that can result to our state from a lack of unification between the national apparatuses and the Russian apparatus is infinitely less than that which will be done not only to us, but to the whole International, and to the hundreds of millions of the peoples of Asia, which is destined to follow us on to the stage of history in the near future. It would be unpardonable opportunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities. The need to rally against the imperialists of the West, who are defending the capitalist world, is one thing. There can be no doubt about that and it would be superfluous for me to speak about my unconditional approval of it. It is another thing when we ourselves lapse, even if only in trifles, into imperialist attitudes towards oppressed nationalities, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled

defence of the struggle against imperialism. But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins.

*Lenin*

December 31, 1922

Taken down by M.V.

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*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 36, pp. 605-11

**From the Article  
BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER**

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes—concessions which, insignificant though they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of “class truce”.

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual “maturing” of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising. On the other hand, the entire East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited working people, reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and the U.S.A.?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation



with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Government, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack enough civilisation to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy, to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Project, etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a

ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and must seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov Power Station,<sup>94</sup> etc.

March 2, 1923

*Pravda* No. 49,  
March 4, 1923

*Collected Works*,  
Vol. 33, pp. 498-501

Signed: *N. Lenin*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The War in China*—reference is to the brutal suppression in 1900 by Germany, Russia, Britain, the U.S.A., Japan, France, Italy and Austria-Hungary of the popular anti-imperialist I Ho Tuan movement, known also as the Boxer Uprising.

The uprising was the people's answer to the partition and spoliation of their country by the powers following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, when the imperialists seized a number of Chinese areas, compelled the Chinese Government to lease important seaports for a period of 99 years, and divided the country into zones of influence. Manchuria thus became a Russian zone, the ten central and southern provinces came under the sway of Britain, Shantung became a German zone of influence, etc. Imperialist depredation led to unsupportable taxes, impoverishment of the peasants and artisans and general economic dislocation. The chief demand of the movement, therefore, was expulsion of foreigners.

In June 1900, large I Ho Tuan detachments entered Peking and forced the imperial government to declare war on the powers. The latter sent an army of 60,000 against the insurgents and the uprising was suppressed with the utmost brutality. Whole towns were razed to the ground, priceless monuments destroyed and much of the country's wealth plundered.

In September 1901, the Peking Government was forced to sign a protocol providing for a huge indemnity, the stationing of foreign troops in China, a foreign-controlled legation quarter in Peking, etc. The protocol virtually made China a semi-colony. The tsarist government took advantage of these events to occupy Manchuria.

p. 21

- <sup>2</sup> This refers to the uprising of the Indian people against the British rule in 1857-59. The Sepais (Indian mercenaries in the British colonial army), the peasants of the northern and central provinces of India and the urban population all took part in the uprising. Their aim was the expulsion of the British and India's independence. The insurgents took over Delhi, Lucknow and other cities and held out valiantly against the British troops that poured into the country. In the spring of 1859 the British finally put down the uprising with the help of the local feudal princes. The colonialists put down the uprising with unprecedented brutality.

Two years later a terrible famine gripped Hindustan: close to one million people died of starvation. In 1865 and 1866 the provinces of Madras and Orissa fell victim to famine, the provinces

of Bengal and Bihar in 1873-74. Over 2.5 million persons died of hunger from 1876 to 1878, when famine struck both the north and the south of the country simultaneously. These famines, which were a regular occurrence during the British rule in India, were the result of colonial oppression of the country, of brutal exploitation, of the ruin and penury of the Indian masses. p. 22

- <sup>3</sup> *The Stuttgart (Seventh) Congress of the Second International* met on August 18-24, 1907. It was attended by some 900 delegates representing socialist parties and labour organisations of 25 nations. It discussed: 1) the colonial question; 2) relations between political parties and trade unions; 3) immigration and emigration; 4) the franchise for women, and 5) militarism and international conflicts.

The Congress became the scene of a struggle between the revolutionary wing of the international socialist movement represented by the Russian Bolsheviks led by Lenin, the German Left Social-Democrats led by Rosa Luxemburg and others, against the opportunistic wing (Vollmar, Bernstein, Van Kol and others). The opportunists were defeated and the Congress adopted resolutions in which the principal tasks of the socialist parties were formulated in a spirit of revolutionary Marxism. p. 27

- <sup>4</sup> Reference is to the Stuttgart Congress commission that framed the resolution on the colonial question. p. 27

- <sup>5</sup> Reference is to the 1905 December armed uprising which took place in Moscow and in a number of other towns of Russia. That was the peak of the first Russian revolution of 1905-07. p. 30

- <sup>6</sup> The revolution in Persia broke out at the close of 1905, with demonstrations in Teheran, Tabriz and other towns against the despotic regime of the Shah, who had reduced the people to utter destitution and was helping the imperialist powers convert the country into a semi-colony. In August 1906 the Shah was compelled to grant a constitution, and the Majlis (Parliament) was convened in October.

The revolutionary struggle involved ever wider sections of the population. The first Social-Democratic organisations were established in Tabriz and Resht, and a mass labour movement began to take shape. Strikes broke out in the foreign concessions of northern Persia, and elected democratic bodies were set up which organised volunteer detachments to fight the counter-revolution. A peasant movement developed in several areas in 1907; the peasants refused to pay taxes and demanded division of the big feudal estates and seized them.

In August 1907, the tsarist government, having strangled the revolution in Russia, concluded an agreement with the British Government dividing Persia into Russian and British zones of influence. In June 1908, the commander of the Russian Cossack brigade stationed in Teheran, Colonel Lyakhov, compacted with the Shah and engineered a counter-revolutionary coup d'état. The building of the Majlis was bombarded with artillery. The Majlis was dissolved and

some of the deputies executed; Lyakhov was appointed military governor of Teheran.

But the popular struggle continued. Revolutionary detachments captured Tabriz and Resht, and in July 1909, entered Teheran, overpowered Lyakhov's Cossacks and deposed Shah Mohammed Ali. However, power passed into the hands of the big bourgeoisie and landlords, who were eager to crush the revolution.

Towards the end of 1911, the tsarist government occupied Azerbaijan, Gilan and Khorasan, and the British landed in southern Persia. The popular movement was savagely suppressed, all the gains of the revolution wiped out and the rule of the Shah and the feudals re-established.

p. 30

<sup>7</sup> *The Black Hundreds* were monarchist gangs organised by the tsarist police to fight the revolutionary movement. They assassinated revolutionaries, attacked progressive intellectuals and perpetrated Jewish pogroms.

p. 30

<sup>8</sup> Reference is to the Turkish revolution of 1908-09 led by the Young Turks, i.e., members of the Unity and Progress Party founded in 1894 by a group of progressive intellectuals representing the interests of the merchant class.

In July 1908, troops commanded by Young Turk officers mutinied and were supported by the townsfolk and peasants. Fearing the spread of the revolution, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II agreed to restore the Constitution of 1876, which he had himself abrogated in 1878 when Parliament had been dissolved. A new parliament was convened at the end of 1908.

The development of the revolution in Turkey jeopardized the plans of the imperialist powers in the Near and Middle East. Accordingly, in August and September 1908, Germany, Russia, France, Britain, Austria-Hungary and Italy discussed ways and means of suppressing the revolution and further steps to partition Turkey. The outcome of these talks was the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in October 1908 (both provinces had been under temporary Austrian occupation since 1878), Bulgaria definitely seceded from Turkey and Prince Ferdinand of Germany was proclaimed King of Bulgaria.

In April 1909, the Sultan attempted a counter-revolutionary putsch in Constantinople, but after two days of street fighting the Young Turks deposed Abdul-Hamid III and proclaimed Turkey a constitutional monarchy.

The new Young Turk Government sought agreement with the reactionary feudal and clerical element and with the imperialist powers. Turkey remained a semi-colony.

Lenin pointed out that the Turkish revolution of 1908-09 was not a people's revolution, inasmuch as the "mass of the people, the enormous majority, did not come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands" and played no noticeable part in the revolution.

p. 31

<sup>9</sup> The allusion is to Abdul-Hamid II.

p. 31

<sup>10</sup> *Cadets*—Constitutional Democratic Party, founded in 1905. Repre-



sented the Russian liberal bourgeoisie and called for a constitutional monarchy.

During the first Russian revolution of 1905-07, the Cadets called themselves the party of "Popular Freedom" though they betrayed the people and secretly negotiated with the tsarist government on ways and means of suppressing the revolution. The Cadets were one of the Duma "opposition" parties, but supported the tsarist government on all major domestic and foreign issues, and were anxious to share power with it.

During the First World War, Milyukov and the other Cadet leaders were the chief exponents of Russian imperialism. After the February 1917 revolution, they joined the bourgeois Provisional Government, fought the workers' and peasants' revolutionary movement, defended the landlords and tried to force Russia to continue the imperialist war. Following the October Socialist Revolution, the Cadets joined the counter-revolutionary forces in the armed struggle against Soviet Russia.

p. 32

<sup>11</sup> *Plehve*—tsarist Minister of the Interior and Chief of Gendarmes in 1902-04; organised brutal reprisals against revolutionaries. p. 32

<sup>12</sup> *The Russo-Japanese war* (1904-05)—an imperialist war for hegemony in the Pacific, colonial aggrandizement in the Far East and the division of China. Russia suffered defeat, and in September 1905 signed a peace treaty at Portsmouth (U.S.A.), ceding to Japan Port Arthur and Dalny (Dairen), the southern half of the Island of Sakhalin and the southern section of the Chinese Eastern Railway.

The Russo-Japanese War strikingly demonstrated the decay of tsardom, the corruption and incompetence of the tsarist camarilla and generals. Russia's defeat aggravated the political crisis and accelerated the outbreak of the revolution.

p. 33

<sup>13</sup> *l'Humanité*—a socialist daily paper founded in 1904 by Jean Jaurès, French Socialist Party leader; during the First World War was controlled by the Party's Right wing and pursued a social-chauvinist policy. After the split of the Socialist Party at the Tours Congress (December 1920) and the foundation of the French Communist Party, it became its central organ.

p. 34

<sup>14</sup> This refers to General Cavaignac, who brutally suppressed the rebellion of the Paris workers in June 1848, and General Galiffet, who was responsible for the atrocities against the Paris Communards in May 1871.

p. 34

<sup>15</sup> Reference is to the Paris Commune of 1871. The Empire of Napoleon III was shattered by France's defeat in the war with Prussia in 1870. France became a republic. A bourgeois government of "national defence" was set up, its principal object being to suppress the revolutionary movement of the Paris workers. It hastened to conclude a disgraceful peace with Prussia and proceeded to disarm the National Guard, composed chiefly of Paris workers. The latter rose in revolt on March 18, 1871, and took power into their own hands. It was the first attempt in history to establish proletarian dictatorship.

Several days later the Paris Commune was elected by a general

vote of the population. It demolished the old government machine of the bourgeoisie, introduced popular election of all officials and judges, separated the church from the state, and the school from church, turned over industries abandoned by their owners to the workers' associations, decreed a minimum wage for all workers, and introduced a number of other measures in the interests of the workers and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The Commune, however, made the mistake of being insufficiently resolute in its actions. Instead of immediately taking the offensive against Versailles, where the counter-revolutionary government of Thiers was building up an army to attack Paris, the Commune hesitated. "But for all these mistakes," Lenin wrote, "the Commune was the greatest example of the greatest proletarian movement of the 19th century."

Thiers's troops entered Paris on May 21, 1871. For eight days the workers of the French capital, their wives and children, fought with supreme heroism. But the Commune was crushed, and the bourgeoisie launched on a veritable blood-bath against the workers: some 30,000, including many women and children, were brutally done to death; approximately 45,000 were arrested, and thousands more executed or sentenced to penal servitude. p. 35

<sup>16</sup> This refers to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria's secession from the Ottoman Empire in October 1908. See Note 8. p. 37

<sup>17</sup> *The First Russian revolution* (1905-07)—a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It began on Bloody Sunday (January 22, 1905) when tsarist troops fired on a peaceful demonstration of St. Petersburg workers, their wives and children, who had marched to the Winter Palace to submit a petition to the Tsar setting out their grievances. Thousands were killed and wounded.

Russia was swept by a wave of demonstrations, strikes and armed insurrections. The workers—the driving force of the revolution—fought to overthrow the autocracy and establish a democratic republic, abolish the big landed estates, and win an eight-hour working day. The first Soviet of Workers' Deputies was organised in Ivanovo-Voznesensk in the summer of 1905, and soon Soviets began to appear in other industrial centres. The peasants joined the revolution, demanding division of the big estates. The revolution spread to the armed forces: in June 1905, a mutiny broke out on the Black-Sea Fleet cruiser *Potemkin*.

A general political strike was called in October, bringing all industry and railway transport to a standstill. The strike was evidence of the immense power of the working class and on October 17, the Tsar was compelled to issue a manifesto promising a constitution and freedom of speech, assembly, press, etc. The promise was never fulfilled.

An armed uprising broke out in Moscow in December. For nine days the workers, led by the Bolsheviks, fought valiantly against immense odds. Only the arrival of reinforcements from St. Petersburg enabled the tsarist government to put down the uprising.

In 1906, over one million workers were involved in strike actions, and in the first six months peasant uprisings were registered in more than half of the rural areas.

Punitive expeditions were sent to industrial areas and centres of the peasant movement; thousands were killed.

Though the first Russian revolution suffered defeat, its historic significance is immense. For the people of Russia it was, in Lenin's words, a "dress rehearsal" without which the victory of the working class in October 1917 would have been impossible. It exerted a strong influence on the development of the revolutionary movement in Persia, Turkey, China, India and other Asian countries.

p. 37

- <sup>18</sup> *The Berlin Treaty*, providing for partial division of the Ottoman Empire, was concluded in June-July 1878, at a conference of Germany, Russia, Britain, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, France and Italy.

The conference cancelled the Peace Treaty of San Stefano, which Russia had concluded with Turkey after the latter's defeat in the war of 1877-78. Under the new treaty, Russia acquired Batum, Kars and Ardahan, Britain the Island of Cyprus, and Austria-Hungary was allowed "temporary" occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also formalised the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania, and divided Bulgaria into two parts: northern Bulgaria, which became a principality under Turkish vassalage, and southern Bulgaria, which became the autonomous Turkish province of Eastern Rumelia.

p. 40

- <sup>19</sup> Reference is to the tsarist government's claim to the Straits and Constantinople, a claim that clashed with British and German imperialist interests in the Near East. Seizure of the Straits and Constantinople was the principal objective of the Russian capitalists in the First World War.

p. 40

- <sup>20</sup> *The State Duma*—the legislative assembly of tsarist Russia, established as a result of the 1905 revolution. It had no effective power and was elected by a complicated system of franchise which denied the vote to the vast majority of workers and peasants and the non-Russian nationalities.

The *First Duma* (April-July 1906) and the *Second Duma* (February-June 1907) were dissolved by the tsarist government. The *Third Duma* (1907-12) and the *Fourth Duma* (1912-17) were dominated by Black-Hundred supporters of the autocracy.

The Bolsheviks used the Duma rostrum to expose both the policy of the tsarist government and the hypocrisy of the bourgeois-liberal "opposition", which actually supported tsarism. In 1914, the five Bolshevik members of the Duma opposed the imperialist war, and in the following year were arrested and sentenced to penal servitude.

p. 41

- <sup>21</sup> *Vorwärts* (Forward)—the central daily paper of the German Social-Democratic Party, published from 1876 to 1933.

p. 42

- <sup>22</sup> *Novoye Vremya* (New Times) a reactionary pro-monarchist newspaper published in St. Petersburg, came out from 1868 to 1917. p. 42

<sup>23</sup> *The September reactionary conspiracy.* See pages 39-40 of this book.  
p. 44

<sup>24</sup> *Cadets*—see Note 10. *Octobrists*—members of the Union of October 17, a big capitalist monarchist party founded in November 1905, so named to indicate its acceptance of the Tsar's Manifesto of October 17, 1905, which promised to grant constitutional freedoms. Its activities were inimical to the interests of the people and aimed at defending the interests of the big capitalists and capitalist landlords. The Octobrists unreservedly supported the tsarist home and foreign policies, but at times associated themselves with the Duma bourgeois "opposition" in order to win votes. After the October Socialist Revolution the Octobrists, as well as the Cadets, were the chief organisers of the armed struggle against the Soviet Republic.  
p. 44

<sup>25</sup> *The International Socialist Bureau*—the executive organ of the Second International. Lenin was a member from 1905, representing the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.  
p. 48

<sup>26</sup> *The Sixth (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.* met in Prague in January 1912, and was attended by representatives of twenty local party organisations. It actually played the role of a Party congress. It defined the Party's tasks in the new situation created by the growth of mass revolutionary sentiments in Russia, the establishment of a democratic republic, an eight-hour working day and confiscation of the landed estates. In its resolutions the conference exposed the tsarist policy of suppressing Asian peoples' struggle for freedom and independence.

The Prague Conference re-established the all-Russia illegal revolutionary working-class party, expelled the Liquidators and other opportunist groups, elected a new Central Committee and put an end to the formal unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in one Party.  
p. 54

<sup>27</sup> See Note 6.  
p. 54

<sup>28</sup> This refers to the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1911-13.

A broad popular movement against the Manchu dynasty and the foreign imperialists who were plundering and partitioning China developed in the spring and summer of 1911. On the night of October 10, 1911, an insurrection broke out in Wuchang, culminating in the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government. The revolution spread to Hankow, Hanyang, Shanghai and other towns and provinces. An active part was played by the workers, railwaymen, students, coolies, etc. A powerful peasant movement against the feudals and landlords developed around the demand for land and repeal of the ruinous taxes.

The revolution was led by the peasant-supported Tungmenghuei Party, which represented the democratic minded bourgeoisie and intellectuals.

Towards the close of December 1911, a conference at Nanking proclaimed China a republic with Dr. Sun Yat-sen, an outstanding Chinese revolutionary and democrat, as Provisional President.



In February of the following year the Emperor abdicated, but the big bourgeoisie and landlords, the liberal wing of the movement, anxious to put an end to the revolution, nominated for the presidency General Yüan Shih-kai, an outright adventurer who had served under the Manchu dynasty. Sun Yat-sen was compelled to withdraw in favour of Yüan Shih-kai.

The latter received a loan from Russia, Britain, and other imperialist powers in the spring of 1913 and used the money to build up a counter-revolutionary force.

The revolutionary armies of several southern provinces revolted against Yüan Shih-kai in the summer of 1913, at the call of Sun Yat-sen. This "second revolution" was defeated, and Yüan Shih-kai dissolved Parliament, convened in accordance with the constitution he had himself approved in 1912, and banned all revolutionary parties. This was followed by wholesale arrests and executions, culminating in the establishment of a military dictatorship headed by Yüan Shih-kai. p. 54

<sup>29</sup> *Narodnik (Populist)*—adherent of the Narodnik movement, which originated in Russia in the sixties and seventies of the last century.

A petty-bourgeois democratic movement, its ultimate goal was abolition of the autocracy and the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants. It was expressive of the democratic aspirations of Russia's exploited semi-serf peasant masses. The Narodniks considered themselves Socialists, but theirs was a petty-bourgeois, utopian socialism which had nothing in common with an understanding of the objective laws of social development.

The Narodnik slogan of "equalitarian land tenure" called for an even distribution of all the land among the tillers as a means of agrarian "socialisation". In practice, this would have led, in a private property economy, to the abolition of feudal relationships and the development of capitalism. The Narodniks failed to understand the difference between a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which would liberate the peasantry from feudal exploitation, and a socialist revolution, which would turn all the means of production into public property, abolish capitalism and all forms of exploitation.

In the early 1900s, the Narodnik programme was taken up by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Popular Socialists and the Trudoviks, or Group of Toil, in the Duma. p. 56

<sup>30</sup> *The All-Russia Peasant Union*—a revolutionary democratic peasant organisation founded in August 1905. Its chief demand was immediate convocation of a constituent assembly and the granting of political freedoms. Its agrarian programme provided for repeal of private property on land, transfer of government, monastery and royal landholdings to the peasants without compensation. The Union had no consistent policy: though demanding abolition of the landed estates, it agreed to partial compensation of the landlords. The Union ceased to exist in 1906, following a series of police reprisals. p. 57

<sup>31</sup> *Trudoviks*—a group of peasant deputies in the First Duma; formed of petty-bourgeois democrats in April 1906.



The Trudoviks subscribed to the Narodnik equalitarian land tenure programme and demanded transfer to the peasants of all landlord, government, monastery and royal lands, abolition of estate and national inequality and introduction of universal franchise.

Lenin wrote about the Trudoviks: "The peasant masses are engrossed in their great struggle; it is inevitable that they should believe that the agrarian question can be finally solved by taking over all the land. Their dream is of an equalitarian distribution of the land, its transfer to the tiller; they forget completely about the power of capital and money, about the commodity economy, which even with the most 'fair' distribution, must inevitably re-create inequality and exploitation. Engrossed in their struggle against serfdom, they do not see the future, even greater and more difficult struggle against the whole of capitalist society for the complete achievement of socialism." p. 57

<sup>32</sup> In September 1911, Italy attacked Tripoli and Cyrenaica in North Africa, then part of the Ottoman Empire. The weak Turkish garrisons were soon crushed, but for many months the Italians had to contend with the courageous resistance of the Arab population. Under the Lausanne Treaty of October 1912, Tripoli and Cyrenaica became Italian colonies. p. 63

<sup>33</sup> The national liberation movement in Mongolia gained momentum under the influence of the 1911 revolution in China. Outer Mongolia seceded from China in December 1911 and proclaimed its independence. The imperialist powers took advantage of the Chinese revolution to pursue a policy of conquest in Asia. In November 1912, the tsarist government concluded an agreement with the Mongolian feudals, under which the country became a Russian protectorate. At about the same time, Tibet became a British sphere of influence, and eastern Inner-Mongolia a Japanese sphere. p. 65

<sup>34</sup> *Popular Socialists*—a petty-bourgeois party founded in 1906 by the Right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Their political views were similar to those of the Cadets. They supported the bourgeois Provisional Government after February 1917 and joined the counter-revolutionary forces after the October Revolution.

*Socialist-Revolutionaries*—a petty-bourgeois party founded at the end of 1901 and beginning of 1902. Its chief demand was abolition of the landed estates and "equalitarian land tenure". The S.R.s resorted to individual terror as a method of combating the tsarist regime. After the defeat of the 1905 revolution, a substantial section of the party and its leadership sided with the bourgeois liberals. Following the revolution of February 1917, the S.R. leaders joined the Provisional Government, helped put down the peasant movement and wholeheartedly supported the capitalists and landlords against the working class, which was then preparing the socialist revolution.

After the October Socialist Revolution, the Socialist-Revolutionaries took an active part in the counter-revolutionary armed struggle against the Soviet Republic. p. 66

- <sup>35</sup> *Derzhimorda*—a character from Gogol's *Inspector-General*, a police bully. p. 78
- <sup>36</sup> Reference is to the goldfields on the Lena, Siberia. The goldfields were owned by British capitalists, and their partners were Russian capitalists. The owners made huge profits out of the severe exploitation of the workers. On April 4, 1912 tsarist troops shot down a 500-strong peaceful demonstration of miners. The Lena shootings aroused furious indignation of the workers throughout Russia. Strikes and mass demonstrations under revolutionary slogans took place in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other big industrial towns. p. 81
- <sup>37</sup> *Cultural-national autonomy*—an opportunistic programme on the national question advanced in the nineties by the Austrian Social-Democratic leaders Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. Its basic provision was that all persons of the same nationality, irrespective of what part of the country they lived in, should form an autonomous national union, which would have full supervision of public education (separate schools for each nationality) and other cultural activities. This policy would strengthen the influence of the clerical element and of the reactionary nationalistic ideology. By fostering national exclusiveness it would hamper the organisation of the working class. In Russia, the cultural-national autonomy programme was supported by the Liquidators, Bundists and Georgian Mensheviks.
- Lenin sharply criticised this programme in a number of articles, pointing out that it was based on a "thoroughly bourgeois and thoroughly false idea," the purpose being "strongly and durably to fence off all the nations from each other by means of a special state institution". p. 81
- <sup>38</sup> *Liquidators*—an opportunist trend among the Menshevik Social-Democrats after the defeat of the 1905 revolution. The Liquidators demanded the liquidation (hence their name) of the illegal working-class party. They called on the workers to abandon the revolutionary struggle against tsardom and sought to establish an organisation that would abide by the tsarist laws. Lenin and other Bolsheviks consistently exposed the Liquidators as betrayers of the revolution. The Liquidators had no influence among the workers. In January 1912 the Prague Conference expelled them from the Party. p. 84
- <sup>39</sup> *Bund*—the General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia, founded in 1897 and made up chiefly of artisans in western Russia. It followed an opportunist, Menshevik policy, was strongly influenced by the nationalistic Jewish bourgeoisie and sought to isolate the Jewish workers from those of the other nationalities of Russia. After the October Revolution of 1917, the Bund leaders joined the counter-revolutionary forces against the Soviet Republic. The Bund dissolved itself in 1921. p. 84
- <sup>40</sup> Reference is to the programme the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party adopted at its Second Congress in 1903. p. 85

- <sup>41</sup> *The London International Congress of 1896*—the Fourth Congress of the Second International. Its resolution on the right of nations to self-determination will be found on page 95 of this book. p. 85
- <sup>42</sup> See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow, p. 765. p. 88
- <sup>43</sup> *Russkaya Mysl* (The Russian Thought)—a liberal bourgeois monthly journal; after 1905, organ of the Right wing of the Cadets. Appeared from 1880 to 1918. p. 94
- <sup>44</sup> *The First Balkan War* (October 1912-April 1913)—war between an alliance of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, and Turkey for the liberation of Macedonia and other areas with Slav and Greek populations. Turkey was defeated and under the London Treaty of May 1913 lost a large part of her Empire. Macedonia was divided between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, a large portion of Thrace went to Bulgaria, and Albania was proclaimed "independent", with a German prince installed on the throne.
- The Second Balkan War* broke out in June 1913 when Serbia and Greece attacked Bulgaria, which had acquired most of the territory surrendered by Turkey. Bulgaria was supported by Austria-Hungary, while Russia backed Serbia and Greece, which were joined by Rumania and Turkey. Bulgaria was defeated, and under the Bucharest Treaty of August 1913 lost Macedonia to Serbia and Greece. Part of Western Thrace went to Greece and part of Eastern Thrace to Turkey. Rumania was given South Dobruja.
- The Balkan wars were part of the struggle waged by the nations of Eastern Europe and Asia for national liberation and abolition of feudalism. However, the imperialist powers, which supported the rival Balkan alignments, in furtherance of their own ends, constantly interfered in the affairs of the Balkan nations and incited enmity among them. The establishment of national states in the Balkans thus proceeded through wars that brought great suffering to the people. p. 95
- <sup>45</sup> *Fracy*—the Right wing faction of the Polish Socialist Party. Its policy was one of bourgeois nationalism. p. 96
- <sup>46</sup> Reference is to the abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861. p. 97
- <sup>47</sup> *Council of the United Nobility*—a monarchist landlord organisation founded in 1906 to combat the revolutionary movement. p. 104
- <sup>48</sup> *Decembrists*—revolutionaries of the nobility who organised secret societies in the early part of last century. Their purpose was to destroy the autocracy and repeal serfdom. The Northern Decembrist Society staged an abortive coup d'état in St. Petersburg on December 14, 1825. The mutiny of the Chernigov Regiment in the Ukraine, led by officers belonging to the Southern Decembrist Society, was similarly crushed within a few days.
- Despite the heroism of the Decembrists, their revolt failed for lack of mass support.
- Nicholas I took savage reprisals against everyone involved in the movement. Five of the leaders, Pestel, Ryleyev, Kakhovsky, Mura-

vyov-Apostol, and Bestuzhev-Ryumin, were hanged and the rest banished to exile and hard labour in Siberia. p. 104

<sup>49</sup> Lenin cites N. G. Chernyshevsky's *Prologue*. p. 104

<sup>50</sup> This thought is developed in Marx's letter to Engels of December 10, 1869, in Engels's letter to Marx of October 24, 1869, and in Engels's *Flüchtlingsliteratur*. p. 105

<sup>51</sup> Reference is to an emergency congress of the Second International held in Basle in November 1912 to protest against the Balkan war and preparations for world war. The congress adopted a resolution, or manifesto, calling on Socialists in all countries to "prevent the outbreak of war" and declaring that "the proletariat considers it a crime to shoot at its brothers for the sake of the profits of the capitalists, the ambitions of the dynasties, or the secret treaties of the diplomats". Should war break out, "Socialists must intervene to achieve its speedy termination and exploit the economic and political crisis created by the war to rouse the people and thereby hasten the collapse of capitalist domination".

When war did break out in 1914, most of the Second International leaders betrayed socialism, renounced the Basle resolution and sided with the imperialist governments. The Russian Bolsheviks headed by Lenin, the German Left Social-Democrats (Liebknecht, Luxemburg) and groups in other socialist parties, remained true to the principles of internationalism and in conformity with the Basle manifesto called on the workers to combat the imperialist governments and the imperialist war. p. 110

<sup>52</sup> *Proudhon* (1809-1865)—French petty-bourgeois Socialist and anarchist who failed to understand that poverty, inequality, exploitation and all the other evils of capitalism could be removed only by destroying the capitalist relations of production. Lenin wrote of him: "Not to abolish capitalism and its basis, commodity production, but to purge this basis of abuses, of excesses, and so forth; not to abolish exchange and exchange value, but, on the contrary, to 'constitute' it, to make it universal, absolute, 'fair', free from fluctuations, crises, abuses—such was Proudhon's idea."

Proudhon and his followers took a wrong attitude on the national question too: they opposed national liberation movements, alleging that "nationality" and "nation" were "out-moded prejudices".

In his *Poverty of Philosophy* and other works Marx sharply criticised the theory and political views of Proudhonism, demonstrating their quasi-scientific and reactionary nature. p. 121

<sup>53</sup> Reference is to the editorial board of *Sotsial-Demokrat*, central organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, published in Paris and Geneva in 1908-17. Lenin took over the editorship in 1911. p. 122

<sup>54</sup> *The Zimmerwald Manifesto* was adopted at the conference of Socialist-Internationalists held at Zimmerwald (Switzerland) in September 1915. Lenin characterised the conference as the "first step" in developing an international movement against the imperialist war. The conference was attended by Socialists from

eleven European countries, including Russia, Germany, France and Italy.

The Manifesto condemned the imperialist governments and, though not trenchantly enough, the social-chauvinists. It was the basis for the Zimmerwald Association. A Left Zimmerwald group headed by Lenin was formed at the conference. It sharply criticised the conference majority for its near-Centrist position and urged the conference to call for a complete break with social-chauvinism and for mass revolutionary struggle against the imperialist governments.

The Zimmerwald Lefts elected a bureau which worked to unite the various revolutionary internationalist groups. p. 123

<sup>55</sup> *Berner Tagwacht*—newspaper of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party. p. 123

<sup>56</sup> Marx refers to his letters to Engels of June 7 and 20, 1866 and November 2 and 30, 1867. p. 126

<sup>57</sup> The International Socialist Commission, elected by the Zimmerwald Conference (see Note 54), in No. 3 (February 1916) of its bulletin issued the call for the second international socialist conference and invited all Zimmerwald affiliates to submit their proposals. The present article was written in response to that invitation. Lenin made two drafts; the text given here is part of the first.

The second international socialist conference was held in the Swiss village of Kienthal on April 24-30, 1916. p. 131

<sup>58</sup> G. V. Plekhanov. p. 139

<sup>59</sup> *The Spanish-American War of 1898*—an imperialist war for possession of Spain's colonies in Latin America. The United States scored an easy victory and under the peace treaty of December 1898, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines became American colonies. Cuba was made an independent republic, but with a constitution which entitled the U.S. armed forces to intervene in her internal affairs. This gave the U.S. Government and monopolies virtual control of the island.

The people of these former Spanish colonies continued to fight for independence, now against their new rulers. In the Philippines the armed struggle continued for two years. p. 146

<sup>60</sup> *Fashoda*—a village on the White Nile in Eastern Sudan. The "Fashoda incident" of 1898 nearly led to war between Britain and France.

A French expeditionary force captured the village in July 1898, and in September the British demanded its withdrawal, threatening war if the French refused. In November the French Government yielded. Under the Anglo French agreement of 1899, the Eastern Sudan became an Anglo Egyptian condominium, though Britain retained her virtual control of the area. p. 178

<sup>61</sup> *The Internationale group* was founded in the early days of the First World War by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Klara Zetkin and other German Left Social-Democrats. The group was persecuted for its revolutionary activities, notably its campaign against German imperialism and exposing the Social-Democratic



leaders who sided with the German Government. Rosa Luxemburg and other members of the group took an erroneous stand on a number of theoretical and political questions. Lenin criticised their mistakes in "The Junius Pamphlet", "A Caricature of Marxism" and other articles. In January 1916, it was renamed the Spartacus Group, and later the Spartacus League, the forerunner of the German Communist Party established in December 1918. p. 181

- <sup>62</sup> *Economism*—an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement in the late 90s and early 1900s. The Economists held that the political struggle against tsarism should be conducted chiefly by the liberal bourgeoisie, while the workers should confine their struggle to such economic demands as better conditions, higher wages, etc. They rejected the guiding role of the Party and the importance of revolutionary theory in the labour movement maintaining that it must develop spontaneously. The theory of economism was exposed by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* published in 1902. A. Martynov, mentioned elsewhere in this volume, was one of the Economist leaders. p. 197
- <sup>63</sup> *Suzdal daubing*—generally, crude botching. The expression refers to the crudely painted icons for which Suzdal uyezd in Russia was famous. p. 203
- <sup>64</sup> See Note 51. p. 206
- <sup>65</sup> *Centrism*—a trend in the international labour movement. The Centrists in the Second International parties took a half-way position between the avowed opportunists and the Left revolutionary wing. During the First World War they supported the chauvinist policy, but advanced pacifist slogans in an effort to divert the workers from revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war, and held out the hope of a "democratic peace without annexation". Karl Kautsky was one of the theoreticians of Centrism. p. 206
- <sup>66</sup> *Rech* (Speech)—the central organ of the Cadet Party, published from 1906 to 1917. *Birzheviye Vedomosti* (The Stock Exchange News)—a capitalist paper published in St. Petersburg from 1880 till 1917. p. 212
- <sup>67</sup> *Dyelo Naroda* (The People's Cause)—the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary (S.-R.) Party, published from 1917 to 1918. p. 222
- <sup>68</sup> *Izvestia* (Gazette) of the Petrograd Soviet—a Menshevik-S.-R. paper. p. 223
- <sup>69</sup> *Chartism*—the first mass revolutionary working-class movement that took place in Britain in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century. The participants drew up a petition (People's Charter) to be presented to Parliament demanding universal franchise, repeal of the property qualifications for parliamentary candidates, etc. For several years meetings and demonstrations swept the country involving millions of workers and artisans. In April 1848 a new petition was signed by more than five million people. The petition was rejected by Parliament. Chartists were severely

prosecuted and their leaders arrested. The movement was suppressed. However, the Chartists had a tremendous influence on the further development of the international working-class movement. p. 233

<sup>70</sup> *The Anti-Socialist Law* was introduced in Germany by the Bismarck Government in 1878. It banned the Social-Democratic Party, all mass labour organisations and the labour press. The best section of the German Social Democrats, led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, conducted extensive illegal activities, with the result that the Party gained influence and polled nearly 1,500,000 votes in the parliamentary elections of 1890, forcing the government to repeal the law. p. 233

<sup>71</sup> Reference is to the Wilhelmshafen naval mutiny in July-August 1917, in support of the sailors' demand for termination of the war. The mutiny was savagely suppressed and the leaders sentenced to death or hard labour. p. 235

<sup>72</sup> *Scheidemann*—one of the most reactionary German Social-Democratic leaders. He had an active part in suppressing the Berlin workers' uprising of January 1919 and was Prime Minister from February to June 1919.

*Spartacus League*—see Note 61.

*Independents*—the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, a Centrist splinter group organised in April 1917. Its Left wing joined the Communist Party of Germany in December 1920 and the Right wing returned to the Social-Democratic Party in 1922.

The Independents opposed the reorganisation of the workers' Soviets set up during the November Revolution of 1918 into organs of governmental power. The Soviets, they suggested, should "complement" Parliament, a method that would have deprived them of independence and turned them into auxiliaries of the bourgeois government machine. p. 236

<sup>73</sup> *Maximum programme*. The programme adopted by the Second Congress of the Party in 1903 consisted of two parts: a minimum programme calling for the overthrow of tsarism, a democratic republic, the eight-hour working day and other demands attainable under capitalism; and a maximum programme, formulating the ultimate goal of the working class, viz., socialist revolution, proletarian dictatorship, the building of a socialist society. p. 237

<sup>74</sup> On December 31, 1917, the Council of People's Commissars officially recognised the independence of the Finnish Republic. On the same day Lenin handed the text of the decree to Svinhufvud, the reactionary head of the Finnish Government.

*The Smolny Institute* was the headquarters of the Soviet Government up to its transfer to Moscow in March 1918. p. 237

<sup>75</sup> The letter was a reply to a message received by Lenin from Amanullah Khan. In 1919 Amanullah Khan headed the liberation war against the British colonialists and in 1921 proclaimed the independence of Afghanistan. An agreement of friendship between Soviet Russia and Afghanistan was concluded that same year. p. 242

<sup>76</sup> *The Turkestan Commission* was sent to Tashkent in October 1919 by decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars to ensure correct implementation of the Party's national policy in Central Asia. The Commission was guided by the decision of the C.E.C. and Council of People's Commissars drafted by Lenin, which stated that "self-determination of the peoples of Turkestan and abolition of national inequality in every form and shape and of privileges for one national group at the expense of others, constitute the foundation of the Russian Soviet Government's policy and should be regarded as the guiding principle in the work of all its agencies. For only activities based on this principle can definitely overcome the distrust, created by many years of Russian tsarist domination, which the toiling masses of Turkestan feel for the workers and peasants of Russia." p. 245

<sup>77</sup> *The Constituent Assembly Committee*—a counter-revolutionary government formed in Samara in the summer of 1918. It fled from Samara when the Red Army captured the city in October 1918, and was dissolved shortly thereafter. p. 248

<sup>78</sup> Reference is to the treaty signed after the First World War in Versailles in June 1919, between the allied powers and defeated Germany. An imperialist treaty, it formalised the redivision of the world in favour of the victorious powers, among which Germany's colonies were divided. Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France. Huge reparations were levied on Germany. She also had to surrender a large part of her mercantile marine, huge quantities of coal and practically her entire stock of dyes, chemicals, etc.

The Versailles Treaty was a staggering burden on the German people, who were heavily taxed and suffered from chronic unemployment. The German capitalists, on the other hand, retained their dominant position and continued to amass big profits. p. 250

<sup>79</sup> *The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk* was signed in March 1918, on terms that were exceedingly onerous for Russia. Latvia, Estonia and Poland were annexed by Germany and the Ukraine became a German dependency. A heavy indemnity was laid on Russia. The Soviet Government was compelled to sign the treaty because the tsarist army had disintegrated and the Red Army was only being organised. The peace treaty gave the young Soviet Republic a vitally needed respite to build up its forces against internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention.

The treaty was annulled after the German revolution of November 1918. p. 250

<sup>80</sup> Reference is to a period in which the bourgeois Provisional Government, which came to power in Russia after the February Revolution of 1917, was headed by the Socialist-Revolutionary Kerensky, who pursued a policy of supporting the capitalists and was a traitor to the interests of the people. At the start, a significant number of workers still trusted the petty-bourgeois parties of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. However, under the influence of the events which took place in the summer of 1917, and especially after the counter-revolutionary revolt of General

Kornilov in August 1917, a crucial change took place in the mood of the masses, who had now become convinced of the harmfulness of the Menshevik Socialist-Revolutionary policies and were coming over to the side of the Bolsheviks: by September 1917 the Petrograd, Moscow and many provincial Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies became Bolshevik.

p. 258

<sup>81</sup> Lenin's message *To the Indian Revolutionary Association* was transmitted by radio in English. It was a reply to a resolution, adopted on March 4, 1920, by a rally of Indian revolutionaries and forwarded to Lenin expressing profound gratitude to Soviet Russia for her historic struggle to liberate the oppressed classes and nations.

p. 267

<sup>82</sup> Lenin wrote his remarks on the typewritten copy of a report (in German) prepared by A. Sultan-zade, apparently for the Committee on the National and Colonial Questions. Sultan-zade's report on the prospects of a social revolution in the East was delivered at the plenary meeting of the Second Congress of the Communist International on July 28, 1920.

p. 288

<sup>83</sup> *The Two-and-a-Half International* was founded in Vienna in 1921 at a conference of Centrist parties and groups which, under pressure of the revolutionary-minded masses, temporarily seceded from the Second International and returned to it in 1923.

p. 306

<sup>84</sup> On April 13, 1919 the British troops savagely suppressed a peaceful meeting in Amritsar (India). Four hundred people (including women and children) were killed, 120—wounded. A mass popular movement against the British colonialists spread all over the country.

p. 307

<sup>85</sup> Reference is to G. I. Safarov's *Current Problems of the National Policy*, published in 1921.

p. 310

<sup>86</sup> Reference is to Lenin's theses on national and colonial questions written by him for the Second Congress of the Communist International.

p. 311

<sup>87</sup> *The Eastern Peoples' Propaganda and Action Council* was elected in September 1920, at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku. This letter was in reply to a request for an article for the first issue of the Council's newspaper, *Krasny Vostok* (The Red East).

p. 314

<sup>88</sup> *Iskra* (The Spark), the first all-Russia illegal Marxist newspaper founded by Lenin in 1900 and secretly transported into Russia. It played a paramount part in fostering ideological unity among Russian Social-Democrats and laid the groundwork for welding the scattered local organisations into a revolutionary Marxist party. The name "old Iskra" was used to distinguish it from the "new", Menshevik, *Iskra* of 1903-05.

p. 317

<sup>89</sup> Reference is to the workers' contributions to the *Pravda* (The Truth) fighting fund.

p. 319

<sup>90</sup> In March 1922, a workers' uprising broke out in South Africa. The reactionary government of General Smuts used artillery, tanks and

aircraft against the insurgents, and the uprising was put down on March 14. Hundreds of workers were killed and thousands court-martialled. The young Communist Party of South Africa took an active part in the revolt, many of its members being killed in the fighting. p. 319

- <sup>91</sup> In September 1922, Edouard Herriot, leader of the French Radical Socialist Party and prominent French politician, visited Soviet Russia and had talks in Moscow with leaders of the Soviet Government. His mission played a big part in developing Franco-Soviet trade and other contacts. p. 321

- <sup>92</sup> Reference is to the conference on the Near East problem held in Lausanne in November 1922-July 1923.

Convened on the initiative of Britain, France and Italy, it was attended also by Japan, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey; the U.S.A. was represented by observers.

Soviet Russia was invited to participate only in the discussion of the Straits issue. The Soviet delegation proposed complete freedom for mercantile shipping in the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles, on the understanding that both in peace-time and war-time the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus would be closed to all naval ships and military aircraft, with the exception of Turkish. That proposal was rejected, and the British plan providing for the free passage of naval craft adopted.

The peace treaty between Greece and Turkey was signed during the Lausanne Conference. p. 322

- <sup>93</sup> Reference is to the suggestion that the Soviet republics be united by joining the R.S.F.S.R. as autonomous units. This idea was made the basis of the draft resolution on relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and the independent republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Federation, presented by Stalin and adopted in September 1922 by the C.C. Commission appointed to draw up proposals for a full meeting of the C.C. In a letter to the members of the Political Bureau (September 27, 1922) Lenin subjected the draft to serious criticism. He proposed a fundamentally different solution, namely voluntary unity of all the Soviet Republics, the R.S.F.S.R. included, in a union of Soviet republics, in which each member would enjoy full equality. Lenin wrote: "We recognise our equality with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and the others, and together with them will join the new union, the new federation. . . ." The C.C. Commission redrafted the resolution in conformity with Lenin's proposal, and the new draft was approved by a plenary meeting of the C.C. in October 1922. Its decision was the basis for all the preparatory work which culminated in the historic decision of the First All-Union Congress of Soviets of December 30, 1922, proclaiming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. p. 325

- <sup>94</sup> *Volkhov Power Station*—the name of the big hydropower project on the Volkhov River, near Leningrad, the first to be undertaken by the Soviet Union. Construction began in 1918, but was fully developed only in 1921, after the Civil War. The Volkhov power plant was commissioned in 1926. p. 335



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